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The Founding
of the
Augustana Synod
1850-1860

By

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PREFACE

In writing this brief, but tremendously important, chapter in the history of the Augustana Synod the author has sought to set forth the compelling events and personalities that shaped the destiny of the Swedish Lutheran Church in America. The first decade of Swedish-American Lutheranism was rich in personalities and problems, and the historian has a very real and responsible obligation to his generation to make as clear as the documents at his disposal permit why and how the Augustana Synod came into being. Because of the highly controversial character of the period it is not only desirable but absolutely necessary that every essential statement should be fortified by citations to the source of information. Indeed it is but a simple act of justice to the men who played their parts in those years of hardship and controversy.

In view of the fact that among the Scandinavians who organized the Augustana Synod the Swedes were numerically and otherwise the more influential a considerable body of the material cited pertains to them, rather than to the Norwegian brethren, although they have not been ignored. Another pertinent consideration in this regard is the fact that with the withdrawal

of the Norwegians in 1870, the Augustana Synod became a purely Swedish body.

The present writer feels a deep sense of obligation to Dr. Erik Norelius, the pioneer historian of the Augustana Synod, for his invaluable services in collecting and preserving a great mass of manuscripts and documents pertaining to its history and making some of them available in printed form. His contributions in the form of a history in two stout volumes and in biographies, reminiscences, articles, addresses, and editions of documents cannot be ignored by future historians. For permission to use the Norelius manuscripts, newspapers, and other documents, and for making them available under very pleasant working conditions, the author desires to record his grateful appreciation of the courtesies of the officials of the Augustana Book Concern and of the Augustana College Library. A stipend from the American Council of Learned Societies furnished substantial aid and encouragement in the collection of material and is gratefully acknowledged. My wife lent considerable assistance in copying material.

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SYNODICAL SETTING OF THE PIONEER CHURCHES

When the Rev. Lars Paul Esbjörn, the first Swedish Lutheran minister among the nineteenth century immigrants, arrived at Andover, Illinois, in the last half of the year 1849, he found his countrymen scattered in small communities, poor in the goods of this world, almost without leadership, without churches, and without pastors. It is true that a few men had seen the need of religious work among the Scandinavians and had enlisted in the cause. Prominent among them was the zealous Methodist Rev. O. G. Hedström who had established the Bethel ship in New York, where he lightened the burden of more than one discouraged and bewildered immigrant. His brother, the Rev. Jonas Hedström, in 1846 had organized the first Swedish Methodist church west of New York in Victoria, Knox County, Illinois, from which place he made visits to other Swedish settlements, at the same time working at his trade as blacksmith.¹ Gustaf Unonius, the founder

¹ Eric Johnson and C. F. Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois. Historiska Anteckningar* (Chicago, 1880), pp. 286-291. — It is true that there was a Swedish Lutheran minister, Peter Bökman, in America before Esbjörn, but he returned to Sweden before 1850 and played no important part in the religious history of the Swedish-Americans.

of the little colony at Pine Lake, Wisconsin, now an Episcopal minister, was making frequent visits to his countrymen, impressing upon them the necessity of having a ministry ordained by bishops.² From the New Jerusalem at Bishop Hill, Illinois, missionaries had gone out to preach the gospel as expounded by Eric Janson. A few Norwegian pastors had found time to render aid to their Swedish brethren in the course of their work among their countrymen.

It is impossible for the men and women of this generation to visualize the problems which confronted the pioneer Swedish pastor. Esbjörn arrived in America ignorant of conditions and almost penniless. Without organization and without means, he turned to the American Home Missionary Society, whose office was in New York. Although this energetic organization was supported by the Congregationalists, its officers recognized no denominational boundaries in furthering the cause of Christianity and willingly granted financial assistance to the needy Swedish Lutheran minister at the beginning of the year 1850.³ Nine years later Esbjörn paid a glowing tribute to the Christian fel-

² Gustaf Unonius, *Minnen från en sjuttonårig vistelse i Nordvestra Amerika* (2 vols., Uppsala, 1861, 1862); E. Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika* (Rock Island, Ill., 1890), Vol. I., p. 89.

³ Esbjörn's contract with the Society, which is preserved in the Norelius collection at Rock Island, Illinois, bears the date January 14, 1850. It is translated into Swedish and printed in Norelius' work, Vol. I., pp. 128, 129.

lowship of this society which had asked no questions as to what sect he belonged to—none but “Do you desire to build up the Kingdom of Christ?”⁴

The Lutheran synods in the East were unable to render substantial aid to the struggling pastors in the West, partly because of the rather disorganized condition of the Lutheran Church in America, partly because of the difficulty of convincing Eastern Lutherans of the needs in the newer section, and partly because

⁴ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, quoted in the *Missionary* (Pittsburgh), June 2, 1859. Norelius (*Svenska Luterska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika*, Vol. I., pp. 125 ff.) censures Esbjörn for accepting aid from a Congregational organization, declaring that he thereby compromised Lutheranism. The Rev. T. N. Hasselquist, who arrived in America in 1852, followed Esbjörn's example and applied for aid. In his quarterly report to the American Home Missionary Society Hasselquist expresses warm gratitude for the aid extended. (*Home Missionary*, July, 1853.) It is difficult to understand Norelius' position, in view of the fact that the Society granted aid without pledging the beneficiaries to any doctrinal position. On its seventy-seventh anniversary, May 11, 1853, the Society had in its service 1,087 ministers in twenty-seven states and territories, 559 of whom were laboring in the Southern and Western states and territories. (*The Missionary*, August, 1853.) It is interesting to note that the Rev. W. A. Passavant, the versatile and energetic editor of the *Missionary*, wrote in his paper, February, 1853, with reference to Esbjörn's report to the Society: “The American Home Missionary Society is doing a truly kind and fraternal service to our Church by assisting in the support of such faithful servants of the Master.”

the older churches were wrestling with their own financial problems. Not but that, as early as 1851, three Lutheran synods—the Joint Synod of Ohio, the Pittsburgh Synod, and the Pennsylvania Synod—ordered collections to be taken in their congregations, where practicable, for the erection of churches under the direction of Esbjörn.⁵

In 1850 Esbjörn organized a Swedish Lutheran congregation in Andover with only ten members. Such was the fear of the Swedish State Church among the people of Andover—a fear intensified by the agitation of itinerant ministers of other denominations—that the pastor did not dare to enroll the members in the *Kyrkobok* which he had brought from Sweden.⁶

Esbjörn was the target for the most bitter attacks of enemies who charged that he was a tool of the Established Church of Sweden.⁷ Partly to counteract the proselyting activity of other churches, a four-page

⁵ *Lutheran Observer* (Baltimore), August 22, 1851. In 1852 Esbjörn reported that he had received collections from fifteen parishes out of all those belonging to the Ohio, Pittsburgh, and Pennsylvania synods. — *Lutheran Standard* (Columbus, Ohio) quoted in the *Missionary*, April, 1852.

⁶ L. P. Esbjörn, *Berättelse om de Svenska Lutherska Församlingarnas Uppkomst och närvarande Tillstånd framställd vid Upsala Erkestifts Prestmöte den 14 Juni 1865*. (Eleven page pamphlet.)

⁷ Esbjörn to Badger, February 28, 1850, in Norelius, *De Svenska Lutherska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika*, Vol. I., pp. 134, 135; Esbjörn to *Lutheran Standard*, in the *Missionary*, April, 1852.

circular was published in 1850, entitled "Wälkomst-Helsning till den Svenska, Norska och Danska Emigranten." This pamphlet was written by Esbjörn and its publication was financed by the Rev. William Alfred Passavant, who from the beginning of his eminently useful career as preacher, editor, and philanthropist, was intensely interested in gathering into the Lutheran fold the Scandinavian immigrants who were beginning to flock into the Middle West. The document was mainly religious, exhorting the Scandinavians to join Lutheran congregations that accepted the unaltered Augsburg Confession and used Luther's Smaller Catechism. A warning was sounded against proselyters, and it was asserted that there was more spirituality in the Lutheran Church in America than there was in Europe. The location of Lutheran congregations was given and the immigrant was informed as to the routes by which they could be reached.⁸

Esbjörn's first years in America were crowded with experiences of many sorts. He organized congregations, built churches, made preaching tours, baptized children, confirmed youths, married the living, buried the dead, spoke words of comfort to the sick, gave advice and assistance to sorely vexed immigrants, solicited funds by personal interviews and through correspondence, and sought to win men for the ministry.

When the church at Andover was under construc-

⁸ The pamphlet, "Words of Welcome to the Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish Immigrant," is preserved in the Norelius collection. — See the *Missionary*, February 4, 1858.

tion heavy rains deluged and damaged the unburnt bricks and carried away the neighboring saw mills and bridges. In consequence lumber had to be hauled thirty-four miles over exceedingly bad roads and through deep sloughs. Lime and sand and other materials had to be transported from distant places. "Death has bereft us of many valuable members," Esbjörn wrote in 1852,⁹ "and still worse, a swarm of sectarian mechanics, farmers, etc., appointed preachers by another denomination, do their utmost to undermine the Lutheran churches, draw away their members, or at least draw their zeal and discourage them." To the American Home Missionary Society he wrote the following year that sickness had taken heavy toll among the immigrants.¹⁰ The new arrivals had been lodged in the church, in barns, and in cabins. At least forty persons died of the cholera. The death of Mrs. Esbjörn had cast a heavy shadow. The pastor had been able to travel but little owing to illness and the lack of means to purchase a horse. In renewing his application for aid Esbjörn was able to report that the church was plastered and that efforts were being made to furnish it with seats and a pulpit. Although the membership of the congregation had increased to about two hundred, the prevailing sickness had made it impossible to get along without aid. "When the father is sick, two, three or four months of the best

⁹ Letters in the *Missionary*, January, April, 1853.

¹⁰ *Home Missionary*, quoted in the *Missionary*, February, 1853.

time for earning money on the railroad, and the mother, if she be any better, has two or three sick children to take care of, and the physician and the druggist take some ten, twenty or thirty dollars, there is little left in the cabin of the poor stranger.”¹¹

Esbjörn, with all the disadvantages and discouragements that confront the pioneer, had the advantage of building from the ground up, because the newly organized congregations were not affiliated with any synod. He knew the history of the Swedish churches on the Delaware and could profit by their mistakes. The Delaware churches retained their connection with the mother church in Sweden, from whence ministers were sent to serve them. With the passing of the years this arrangement proved costly to American Lutheranism; the Delaware colonists gradually lost interest in the mother country, and the ministers, trained in the polity and practice of a state church, were unable to adapt themselves to American conditions. But for the strongly German character of the Pennsylvania Synod the Swedish churches might have affiliated with that body. Orphaned by the mother church and unable to establish congenial synodical relations with other Lutheran churches, the Delaware churches passed into the control of the Episcopal Church, a

¹¹ *Home Missionary*, April, 1854. — The editor of the magazine headed the application “Sowing in Tears,” and added that there was a beautifully Christian simplicity in the spirit and style of the application.

consummation which has sorely grieved many American Lutherans to this day.¹²

The shepherd of the first nineteenth-century Swedish Lutheran congregations in America wisely delayed his decision with reference to synodical affiliation until he had had time to inform himself about religious conditions in the new country.¹³ From the beginning Esbjörn was much concerned about the doctrinal winds that were blowing in the several Lutheran synods. Although he stood firmly on the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the other symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, in the earlier years he was, like Hasselquist, unionistic in spirit and somewhat Methodistic in practice.¹⁴ Several possibilities were open to him. He might have joined with a few Norwegian churches in Wisconsin and formed a separate synod; but their leaders were strongly tinged with state church ideas and were, in Esbjörn's opinion, unsound in doctrine.¹⁵ He cast rather friendly glances in the direction of cer-

¹² Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika*, Vol. I., pp. 777, 778.

¹³ Esbjörn's letter in the *Missionary*, July, 1850, cited in G. H. Gerberding, *Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, D.D.* (2d ed., Greenville, Pa., 1906), p. 208.

¹⁴ Esbjörn to Norelius, January 30, 1856 (MSS.).

¹⁵ The final organization of this synod was effected in 1853. It took the name "Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America" and was usually known as the "Norwegian Synod" or simply the "Synod." — See J. M. Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872* (New York, 1926), pp. 114, 115, 128 ff.

tain German synods, but they were distant and torn with dissension. The English synods in the East were contaminated with "New Lutheranism."¹⁶ There was in the West a Norwegian Lutheran pastor who probably influenced Esbjörn's decision. This man was the Rev. Paul Andersen who immigrated to America in 1843, six years before Esbjörn's arrival in Andover. Andersen was educated at Beloit College and grew up doctrinally in a Presbyterian environment. Upon the completion of his formal education he was minded to enter the Presbyterian ministry, but his broadminded and altruistic Presbyterian friends urged him to seek ordination in the Lutheran Church, where his work among the Scandinavians would be more fruitful. Accordingly, in 1848 he was ordained by the Franckean Synod, at the time probably the most liberal Lutheran body in the country. Andersen was profoundly impressed by the liberal attitude of the Presbyterians. On March 18, 1850, he wrote to the *Lutheran Observer*¹⁷ from Chicago, where he was pastor, that he admired the "noble doctrinal position of the American

¹⁶ Esbjörn, *Berättelse om de Svenska Lutherska Församlingarnas Uppkomst och närvarande Tillstånd*, etc.

¹⁷ April 5, 1850. — On January 14, 1850, Andersen wrote to the *Lutheran Observer* (February 1, 1850) that the spirit of this liberal paper was ever refreshing to his mind and that its views were dear to his heart. He hoped that the paper might have a long life and carry its views of Christian union and brotherly love to its thousands of readers. See also H. L. Dox, *Ibid.*, March 8, 1850, on Andersen's early career.

Lutheran Church," meaning the General Synod. He paid tribute to the disinterested benevolence of the Presbyterian and Congregationalist brethren. With the Wisconsin Norwegians in mind he referred to the "Old Lutherans," who called Andersen and his kind "seceders," "schismatics," and the like.¹⁸ Although Andersen was unionistic, he was highly wrought up over what he considered the unfair and un-Christian proselyting of the Episcopalian Unionius. In order to counteract his efforts, Andersen's church in Chicago was opened to a public discussion, in which the Rev. Messrs. W. M. Reynolds, W. A. Passavant, Gustaf Unionius, and others participated.¹⁹ As early as 1850

¹⁸ The controversy between Andersen and the "state church" Norwegian ministers continued throughout the decade. In the February, 1859, number of the *Olive Branch* (Springfield, Ill.) the Rev. A. C. Preus, president of the Norwegian Synod, published a letter in which he complained of the strictures against the State Church of Norway made in a public letter which Andersen had written during a visit to Norway. See letter of W. M. Reynolds to Hasselquist, January 18, 1859 (MSS.); *Olive Branch*, June, 1860; A. A. Stomberg, "Early Efforts at Scandinavian Church Union in America," in *Yearbook* of the Swedish Historical Society of America, 1923-1924, pp. 17 ff. By 1859 Andersen had become a champion of conservative Lutheranism, but only after many sharp exchanges in the press between him and his Wisconsin adversaries. In 1879 in a public address at Rushford, Minnesota, he admitted that he had erred doctrinally in his earlier career. See Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872*, pp. 95, 96, 103.

¹⁹ Gerberding, *Passavant*, pp. 216, 217.

Andersen, together with a handful of like-minded Norwegians, had organized a Scandinavian Conference; and he had entered into correspondence with Esbjörn in the hope of winning him over.²⁰ After weighing the matter the Swedish pastor concluded that the best course would be to unite with a synod in the West, as Paul Andersen proposed, hoping that such an organization would be formed in Illinois on the basis of the Augsburg Confession.²¹

The opportunity came when representatives of American, German, and Norwegian congregations met on September 18, 1851, at Cedarville, Stephenson County, Illinois, and organized the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois. The following day Esbjörn and his lay delegate appeared in Synod and on motion were received as advisory members.²² A committee of three was appointed to meet Esbjörn

²⁰ H. L. Dox, in *Lutheran Observer*, March 8, 1850. At the meeting of the Franckean Synod in 1851 H. L. Dox, chairman of the committee on petitions, reported that a letter had been received from Paul Andersen stating that it was necessary to organize a synod in the West and requesting a letter of dismissal. In the letter Andersen disclaimed any dissatisfaction with the Franckean Synod. The committee doubted the expediency of the move at present, but was satisfied of the sincerity of Andersen. The dismissal was granted in due course.—*Journals of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Sessions of the Franckean Synod*.

²¹ Esbjörn, in the *Missionary*, July, 1850.

²² *Minutes of the First Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois, September 18–23, 1851*.

and his lay delegate to take under advisement their admission and that of the "Sweedish" churches into the Synod. The committee reported favorably, and Esbjörn was admitted. The Swedish pastor, however, was not entirely satisfied with the doctrinal basis of the new Synod, which accepted the Augsburg Confession as "mainly correct." Accordingly, the Synod granted his request to have printed in the minutes the principles on which his congregations were organized, namely, "that the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church contain a correct summary and exposition of the divine word, wherefore we declare and adopt them as the foundation of our faith and doctrine, next to the Holy Scriptures." The Swedish Lutheran churches from the beginning, it will be noted, planted themselves on the Augsburg Confession and the other symbols.

Esbjörn's action was not taken without serious misgivings. He had thought of joining the Joint Synod of Ohio, an organization that was aspiring to the leadership of Middle Western Lutheranism; but he felt that this was out of the question so long as the Swedes were so few in number and their churches were so remote. He trusted that with the increasing immigration of Swedes the symbolical element in the Synod of Northern Illinois would gain strength and that it would eventually give that body a decidedly orthodox character. Moreover, at this time he was not certain as to the number of the strictly orthodox

in the Scandinavian ranks.²³ In 1855, however, Esbjörn wrote to his intimate friend Erik Norelius that time had vindicated his action. This should not cause us to lose sight of the fact that the affiliation with the Synod of Northern Illinois was never popular with a certain element among the Swedes and that Esbjörn lived to regret the day the step was taken.²⁴

At the second annual convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois at Chicago, in October, 1852, Esbjörn's zeal in safeguarding his doctrinal position again

²³ Esbjörn to Norelius, March 5, 1855, in *Tidskrift för Teologi*, 1899, pp. 272-274. The letter is also printed in *Korsbaneret* (Rock Island, Ill.), 1889, pp. 109 ff.

²⁴ Norelius was never enthusiastic over the Synod of Northern Illinois. See *Lutherska Minnesota-Konferensens Halfsekelfest i Minneapolis, St. Paul och Center City, den 7-11 Okt. 1908* (Rock Island, Ill., 1908), p. 9; Norelius, *De Svenska Lutherska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika*, Vol. I., pp. 791 ff. — This circumstance must be taken into account in reading Norelius' accounts of the doctrinal dissensions in the Synod and the events which led to the secession of the Scandinavians in 1860. The Rev. W. A. Passavant was opposed to the affiliation of the Scandinavians, favoring an independent synod as a part of the General Synod, hoping that the older Lutheran synods would lend financial assistance. See Gerberding, *Passavant*, p. 208. In May, 1860, after the Scandinavians had seceded, Passavant wrote to Norelius that "Br. [Paul] Andersen knows well how I was opposed to the union with the Synod of Northern Illinois, in the first place, and in the 2d place, with the college [Illinois State University], because *I foresaw all that has come to pass.*" (Manuscript letter in the Norelius collection.)

showed itself. When the question of the Synod's joining the General Synod was under consideration, a committee of three, of which Esbjörn was a member, recommended affiliation "Provided that this union shall not be construed into an acknowledgment on the part of all the members of the Synod of Northern Illinois of the precise doctrinal basis of the General Synod."²⁵ Again Esbjörn was hopeful that the step would eventually kill out the loose, unsymbolical, spirit among a considerable element in the General Synod.²⁶ In the light of events which transpired later, it appears that the lengths to which the unsymbolical Americans in the Synod of Northern Illinois were willing to go in order to reassure Esbjörn was prompted in part by their feeling that the Synod needed the strength which the Scandinavians would add. Every effort seems to have been made in these earlier years to make the Scandinavians feel at home by doctrinal concessions, various assignments, and committee appointments.

Esbjörn's caution in committing himself to the union with the General Synod can easily be explained by inquiring into the doctrinal controversy which by 1850

²⁵ *Minutes of the Second Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois, 1852.* It is interesting to note that the Rev. T. N. Hasselquist was received as a member of the Synod at this meeting. He became one of the most influential members.

²⁶ Esbjörn to Norelius, May 12, 1853, in *Tidskrift för Teologi*, 1899, pp. 255-257.

was threatening to disrupt that body, an eventuality which came to pass in the next decade.

The General Synod was organized in 1820 at Hagerstown, Maryland, and by 1860 embraced fully two thirds of the Lutherans in America.²⁷ Its powers were mainly advisory, the district synods retaining in the essentials the jurisdiction which was theirs before the union. The general body had the right of proposing to the district synods the catechism, forms of liturgy, and confession of faith, but it had no power to prescribe in such matters.²⁸ In other words, the General Synod was a very conservative step in the direction of Lutheran union and foreshadowed faintly the great merger which was effected in 1917. It has been said that the agreement to disagree was the highest unity the General Synod ever proposed.²⁹ The fact that the various synods differed in doctrine and forms of service made it impossible to form a general body to which anything more than advisory power could be delegated. It was a union of synods, all of which not only professed to be Lutheran but regarded and acknowledged each other as such.³⁰ Not only was the organization

²⁷ Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872*, p. 102.

²⁸ A. R. Wentz, *The Lutheran Church in American History* (Philadelphia, 1923), pp. 108, 109.

²⁹ *The Javelin*, by "A Lutheran" (Philadelphia, 1871), p. 189.

³⁰ S. S. Schmucker, in *Lutheran Observer*, September 21, 1860.

bottomed on a broad doctrinal basis but it was avowedly unionistic. For instance, at the Baltimore convention in 1845 it was voted to approve cordially of the practice "which has hitherto prevailed in our churches, and those of the Presbyterian Church," of mutually inviting the ministry to act as advisory members in each body; of inviting communicants in regular standing in either Church to partake of the Lord's Supper in the other; and of dismissal of church members at their own request from the churches of the one to those of the other denomination.³¹ Perhaps no better characterization of the General Synod can be given than the one embodied in a letter of William M. Reynolds to William A. Passavant, written in the decade of the forties.³² The writer maintains that there is nothing anti-Lutheran in the General Synod constitution, however un-Lutheran it may be. Its sins are not those of commission but of omission; but there is nothing in it to prevent the synods connected with it to be as Lutheran as they please. "We want a little more pliability in our Lutheran Church in this country than there is in the Formula of Concord," he said. "Let us pay great respect to our symbolical system, but let us not insist upon the reception of every jot and tittle of it. Even if it were wise to act otherwise, we could not do it now, so far at least as our English churches are concerned."

³¹ *Evangelical Review*, Vol. V., p. 267 (October, 1853).

³² Gerberding, *Passavant*, pp. 168, 169.

By 1850 the cleavage between the so-called "American Lutherans" and the symbolists in the General Synod was marked. The most prominent of the "Americans," or "new measure" men, was the Rev. S. S. Schmucker, professor of theology in Gettysburg Theological Seminary and an ardent supporter of the work of the General Synod. This able man had received his theological training in Princeton Theological Seminary and had thus acquired a liberal point of view; but he was interested in committing the Lutheran synods to a confessional position, although he was far from being a symbolist. Indeed he unsparingly employed his prolific pen to counteract the influence of those who planted themselves on the historic Lutheran symbols. He much preferred the constitution of the General Synod which went no farther than to assert that "the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession."³³ He argued that since Lutheranism in the various countries of Europe had acquired a distinctive flavor, the Lutheran Church in America should adapt itself to the genius of American institutions and society. If there is a German Lutheran Church and a Swedish Lutheran Church, why not an American Lutheran Church,—each possessing characteristics arising from different civil governments and from the divergent views of

³³ Wentz, *The Lutheran Church in American History*, p. 173.

their founders?³⁴ Doctor Schmucker could not subscribe to certain provisions of the Augsburg Confession, believing that the doctrine of the bodily presence of the Saviour in the Eucharist, as taught by Luther, was unscriptural.³⁵ He also thought that in failing to repudiate the Roman mass, confession, absolution, exorcism, and baptismal regeneration and in denying the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath the historic document was in error.³⁶ Luther and Melancthon themselves, he asserted, departed from some points in the Confession.

The American Lutheran party had a powerful ally in the *Lutheran Observer*, published in Baltimore and established in 1831, being at the time the oldest Lutheran paper in the United States. By turning out every week a paper abounding in polemics, clever and interesting editorials, and timely and informing communications, the management in the middle of the fifties could boast a subscription list of 10,000 names,

³⁴ Schmucker, in *Lutheran Observer*, November 16, 1845.

³⁵ Schmucker, *Ibid.*, November 9, 1849, August 15, 22, 1851.

³⁶ Doctor Schmucker was a voluminous writer. His doctrinal position can be studied in his three works published in 1855 and 1856: *Lutheran Manual or Scriptural Principles*, etc. (352 pp., Philadelphia, 1855); *Definite Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinary, for Evangelical Lutheran District Synods; Constructed in Accordance with the Principles of the General Synod* (42 pp., Philadelphia, 1855); *American Lutheranism Vindicated* (Baltimore, 1856).

with about 50,000 readers.³⁷ Leaving no one in doubt as to their own convictions and principles, the editors were as a rule very liberal in giving space to articles and contributions expounding various positions on controversial questions. For example, in 1849 the paper ran a series of acrimonious articles on what constituted American Lutheranism, contributed by S. S. Schmucker and W. M. Reynolds, the latter defending the unaltered Augsburg Confession and the other symbolical books.

The influence of the "Old Lutherans," or symbolists, in the Church, augmented each year by the immigration of Germans and Scandinavians, was a thorn in the flesh of the editors of the *Lutheran Observer*. In a long editorial on "Old Lutheranism," September 19, 1851, the writer commented on the fact that this element had planted itself boldly in Missouri, Indiana, and other parts of the Middle West. Its ministers and members are nearly all from Europe, learned for the most part and zealous, but bigoted and semi-Romanist. The editor lamented their obstinate self-will, unrelenting exclusiveness, sacramental superstition, and strong leaning towards semi-Roman rites. Learned in scholastic theology, they are unacquainted with the genius of American institutions and without state sagacity. To expect Christians under a free government and in a perfectly untrammelled church to

³⁷ W. J. Mann, *Lutheranism in America* (Philadelphia, 1857), pp. 33, 34.

think and believe on all points, major and minor, exactly as they do under a despotism in state and church and to look for the same development of the Gospel in all its ramifications in a republic that it exhibits where the adulterous and hampering union of church and state exists was, in the opinion of the editor, so verdant, so puerile, so absurd as only to awaken pity and ridicule. The immediate future looked gloomy to the editor. He saw little hope for improvement among a people who fancied that they had the truth and nothing but the truth and that all the rest of the world was in error and blindness.

Undoubtedly the nativistic or know-nothing spirit which blossomed forth in the decade of the fifties can be detected in the utterances of extreme "New Lutherans." Editorials and communications strongly tainted with know-nothingism appearing in the *Lutheran Observer* at the time when the Scandinavian Lutheran Church was getting under way could not but awaken distrust, not to say antagonism, towards Lutherans who claimed to be the exponents of a new and tolerant Lutheranism.⁸⁸

When in 1851 Esbjörn joined the Synod of Northern Illinois in the hope that the Scandinavian symbolists would counteract the influence of the "New Lutherans," the tide was already tending in his direction, as

⁸⁸ Editorial "Amerikansk Lutheranism," in *Hemlandet*, November 3, 1855.—Norelius in his writings frequently refers to the policy of the *Lutheran Observer*.

events were to prove; but outwardly the balance between the two parties appeared to be nicely adjusted. When Passavant began his career in the first years of the forties, he was a through and through "new measure" man. His education had been acquired in Gettysburg Theological Seminary, where "new measures" were practiced and encouraged.³⁹ After attending a meeting of the General Synod at this time, he wrote: "Whatever may be said of the extravagances of some 'New Measure' men, the representatives of this Synod are a noble body of self-denying and laborious workmen in the vineyard of the Lord."⁴⁰ While it is true that the stronghold of "Old Lutheranism" was in the West, mainly in the Missouri Synod, in the Joint Synod of Ohio, and in the Scandinavian synods, there was an increasing demand for a return to the symbolical books on the part of a goodly number in the East. This was due in part to the extremes of the "new measure" men, which repelled many, and in part to the tendency towards churchliness in other denominations.⁴¹ Even the editor of the *Lutheran Observer* deplored the lack of churchliness in Lutheran churches; but he held that the way to attain it was by begetting piety and not by returning to symbolism.⁴²

In the East certain signs on the religious horizon portended a doctrinal change to those who could di-

³⁹ Gerberding, *Passavant*, p. 83.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁴¹ *Lutheran Observer*, July 26, 1850.

⁴² *Ibid.*

scern them. For some time the quarreling of the *Lutheran Observer* with confessional Lutheranism had been irritating to men like W. M. Reynolds and W. A. Passavant. In order to give conservative Lutheranism a mouthpiece, the first number of the *Evangelical Review*, a quarterly magazine, appeared in July, 1849, with Reynolds as editor-in-chief. After vainly attempting to purchase the *Lutheran Observer*, Passavant established the *Missionary* at Pittsburgh in January, 1848, the paper appearing as a monthly until January, 1856, when it became a weekly with a much larger format. The conservative and gentlemanly policy of this publication soon won for it a host of warm friends. *Hemlandet*,⁴³ the organ of the Swedish Lutheran Church, cordially recommended it to its readers. On the other hand, the views, motives, and aims of the editor were constantly assailed by the editors of the *Lutheran Observer*. Another victory for the conservatives was won when the Pennsylvania Ministerium, the Pittsburgh Synod, the Synod of Northern Illinois, and the Synod of Texas were admitted into the General Synod in 1853.⁴⁴

In a vain attempt to stem the tide of confessional Lutheranism an anonymous pamphlet of forty-two pages appeared in September, 1855, the authorship of which was afterwards acknowledged by Doctor Schmucker. This was the famous "Definite Synod-

⁴³ January 15, 1856.

⁴⁴ Wentz, *The Lutheran Church in American History*, pp. 174, 175.

ical Platform,"⁴⁵ which claimed to find several errors in the Augsburg Confession and was designed to furnish a doctrinal basis for Lutheran synods in the United States in the form of a revised Augsburg Confession. Thereafter the "New Lutherans" were to be known as "platformists."

This "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession," as Schmucker called it, was "prepared, by consultation and coöperation of a number of Evangelical Lutheran ministers of Eastern and Western Synods belonging to the General Synod, at the special request of Western brethren, whose churches particularly need it, being intermingled with German churches, which avow the whole mass of the former symbols. In this revision, not a single sentence has been added to the Augsburg Confession, whilst those several aspects of doctrine have been omitted, which have long

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 175, 176; Gerberding, *Passavant*, pp. 327, 328. —The title in full was "Definite Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinarian, for Evangelical Lutheran District Synods; Constructed in Accordance with the Principles of the General Synod." The second edition, which appeared in 1856, added the following note to the preface: "Some obscurity having resulted, in the first edition, from the selection of the term Platform, as the name of the whole pamphlet, after it had been employed in the work to designate a particular part of it, the nomenclature has been changed in the Preface and captions of the several parts, but not a single word altered in the discussions of the work itself." I am indebted to Professor Abdel Ross Wentz of Gettysburg Theological Seminary for placing copies of both editions at my disposal.

since been regarded by the great mass of our churches as unscriptural, and as remnants of Romish error.”⁴⁶ The “errors” omitted were: the approval of the ceremonies of the mass, private confession and absolution, denial of the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath, baptismal regeneration, and the real presence of the body and blood of the Saviour in the Eucharist.

The introduction to the platform stated that Luther and his coadjutors changed their views on some subjects in the Augsburg Confession, that a quarter of a century after Luther’s death certain writings of Luther and Melancthon and the Formula of Concord, which neither of them ever saw, were made binding on ministers and churches, not by the Church acting of her own free choice but by the civil authorities of certain kingdoms and principalities. It also stated that the entire Lutheran Church of Germany had rejected the symbolical books as a whole and also some of the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession and that the General Synod had introduced a qualified acknowledgment of the Confession.⁴⁷ In listing the “errors” of the symbolical books it was asserted that the extraordinary length of these books was sufficient reason for their rejection as a prescribed creed, “because neither the Scriptures nor the practice of the early centuries affords any warrant for an uninspired and therefore fallible creed nearly as large as the entire Old

⁴⁶ *Definite Synodical Platform* (Philadelphia, 1855), pp. 4, 5.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 4.

and New Testament together. The exaction of such an extended creed is subversive of all individual liberty of thought and freedom of Scriptural investigation.”⁴⁸

The district synod adopting the platform pledged itself not to receive into its body any minister who would not adopt the platform and labor faithfully to maintain its discipline in his charge.⁴⁹

The reception of the platform was most disappointing to Schmucker and his followers and was indicative of the profound change which the Lutheran Church had experienced from 1848 to 1855, as well as prophetic of coming events even more significant. The emigrant ships depositing hordes of Germans and Scandinavians on American shores proved to be more powerful than the facile pens of Schmucker and the editors of the *Lutheran Observer*. The loud voice of the *Observer* was drowned by the chorus sung by the *Missionary*, the *Evangelical Review*, the *Lutheran Standard* (organ of the Joint Synod of Ohio), *Hemlandet*, *Maanedstidende* (organ of the Norwegian Synod), and above all the publications of the Missourians: *Lehre und Wehre* and *Der Lutheraner*. The sum total of the effect of the agitation of the “new measure” men and of the “Definite Synodical Platform” on the Swedish Lutherans was to confirm the conservatives in their convictions and to turn the

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

more liberally inclined towards symbolism.⁵⁰ Down to 1850 the Lutheran Church in America was in a fair way to develop a liberal theology, but this tendenz was checked by the influx of symbolists from Germany and Scandinavia. The echoes of the controversy, however, continued to reverberate long after the men who occupied the stage during the years of transition had passed from the scene. Indeed the scars of the battle are visible even to-day; and the student of American Lutheran Church History will do well to bear this in mind if he aspires to write a truthful history of any branch of the Church.

⁵⁰ Esbjörn to Hasselquist, December 2, 1859 (MSS.): "I said to him that in America we have learned to love and understand the Lutheran doctrine better than we did in Sweden. We are stronger Lutherans than we were there."

II

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

While the doctrinal controversy was raging among the Lutherans in the East, out on the far-flung frontier in the Mississippi Valley leaders were striving to weave Lutheranism into the fabric of a new American society in the making. If the Germans, Swedes, and Norwegians scattered throughout the Upper Mississippi Valley were to be saved for the Lutheran Church, it was imperative that consecrated, educated, and energetic ministers should be placed in the field to preach the Gospel and to organize congregations. Many earnest appeals from the West for ministers were printed in the *Lutheran Observer* and in the *Missionary*. By 1853 three Swedish Lutheran ministers were laboring in the West: L. P. Esbjörn, T. N. Hasselquist, and Erland Carlsson; W. M. Reynolds and W. A. Passavant had visited the home mission field; and a few American Lutheran pastors who had accepted calls to the West were vitally interested in the immigrants. All were agreed that the key to the whole situation was the establishment of an educational institution to train men for service among the Western settlers. By the summer of 1850 S. Sprecher had assumed the presidency of Wittenberg College at Springfield, Ohio; W. M. Reynolds was preparing

to take up his duties as president of the newly founded Capital University at Columbus, Ohio; and S. W. Harkey of Frederick, Maryland, had been called as professor of theology at Hillsboro College, Illinois, founded in 1849.⁵¹

The institution at Hillsboro led a precarious existence, as did every one of the Western institutions for a time. The president of Hillsboro College was the Rev. Francis Springer, a descendant of the Delaware Swedes, an ardent "new measure" man, and a writer and speaker of real ability.⁵² Springer visualized a Western educational institution which was to "thrust in the leaven of American ecclesiasticism and evangelization among the immigrants bearing the Lutheran name";⁵³ and he very soon realized that an institution patterned after his ideal could not function and remain at Hillsboro. Before the organization of the Synod of Northern Illinois the institution was largely under the control of the Synod of Illinois; but in the hope of gaining the support of the younger body, the possibility of removing the institution to a more suitable place was broached at the first meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois. With that end in view a committee was appointed to confer with a committee

⁵¹ *Lutheran Observer*, August 2, 1850. — The catalogues of Hillsboro College are preserved in the library of Gettysburg Theological Seminary.

⁵² Norelius, in *Augustana Theological Quarterly*, 1903, p. 201.

⁵³ Springer, in *Lutheran Observer*, March 2, 1860.

from the Synod of Illinois and authorized to make a proposition to the citizens of Springfield, the capital of Illinois.⁵⁴ At this meeting Esbjörn was elected a trustee of the college.

The negotiations for the removal to Springfield appear to have been conducted on behalf of the college by the Rev. S. W. Harkey, professor of theology, and on behalf of the citizens of Springfield by the Hon. John T. Stuart, a former member of Congress. The citizens of Springfield agreed to contribute \$5,000 to the building fund, one hundred scholarships amounting to \$30,000, and a site of ten acres valued at \$2,000.⁵⁵ It was expected that the Lutherans would contribute \$5,000. The name of the rejuvenated institution remained in doubt for a time. Melancthon College appears to have been decided upon at one time, but that good Lutheran name gave way to the ambitious designation "Illinois State University."⁵⁶

The little institution with the big name opened its

⁵⁴ *Minutes of the First Session of the Synod of Northern Illinois, 1851.* The dividing line between the Synod of Illinois and the Synod of Northern Illinois began at the southern boundary of Warren County on the Mississippi River and extended to a point south of Peoria and thence to the Indiana line.—*Minutes of the Fifth Annual Convention of the Synod of Illinois, September 5, 1850.*

⁵⁵ Letter of John T. Stuart to S. W. Harkey, in the *Missionary*, April, 1852. See also the *Missionary*, March, 1852, and the *Lutheran Observer*, March 19, 1852.

⁵⁶ Springer, in *Lutheran Observer*, November 7, 1851; the *Missionary*, March, 1852.

doors to students in temporary quarters in the early spring of 1852, and by summer work on the "\$35,000 building" had commenced.⁵⁷ The first catalogue of the college, published in 1852, listed eighty-two students, of whom twelve or more were "studying with a view to the ministry."⁵⁸ The faculty was composed of the Rev. Francis Springer, president and professor of political and moral science; the Rev. S. W. Harkey, D.D., professor-elect of theology; the Rev. C. B. Theummel, professor of ancient and modern languages; and the Rev. Edmund Miller, professor of mathematics and principal of the preparatory department. The corner stone of the new building was laid in October, 1852;⁵⁹ but that detail of the building program proved to be the easiest to accomplish. In the spring of 1854 President Springer wrote the following Jeremiad:⁶⁰ "Our new University is indeed up, and under roof; but there it stands, without the sound of a hammer, chisel, or saw, to break the stillness of its solitary and unfinished loneliness. The workmen labor for pay, and we have no money to supply their demands... Not a floor is laid; no door swings at any of the entrances; no plastering smooths the rough walls; no stairway slants from one story to another;

⁵⁷ The *Missionary*, May, 1852; *Minutes of the Second Session of the Synod of Northern Illinois, 1852*.

⁵⁸ The *Missionary*, October, 1852.

⁵⁹ Harkey, *Ibid.*, January, 1853; *Ibid.*, March, August, 1853.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, May, 1854.

and not even a fence encloses the beautiful ground on which the noble and substantial structure stands.”⁶¹ The president, members of the faculty, and financial agents wrote, traveled, and preached, but at the end of the year 1856 a debt of about \$15,000 rested on the institution.⁶² The number of students enrolled in any academic year never reached the two hundred mark, and the rather local character of the institution is indicated by the fact that residents of Springfield were the most numerous by far.⁶³

President Springer's tenure of office proved to be brief. He resigned in 1855 and was succeeded by Doctor Harkey as president *pro tempore*. It appears that with the arrival of Harkey as professor of theology friction developed between him and the president. Harkey, while a man of wider vision than one usually associates with the uncompromising symbolists, was nevertheless fundamentally an "Old Lutheran," whereas Springer had little patience with men of his stripe. In January, 1856, Professor Harkey issued the first number of his monthly paper, the *Olive Branch*, in which he aired his doctrinal views and his understanding of the problems and policies of the Lutheran Church. He believed that the salvation of the Lu-

⁶¹ See the *Missionary*, February, 1855, March 2, 1856.

⁶² Harkey, in the *Missionary*, January 1, 1857.

⁶³ The annual catalogues for 1858-1859 and 1859-1860 are bound with the Minutes of the Synod of Northern Illinois in the Norelius collection. The library of Gettysburg Theological Seminary possesses a complete file of the catalogues.

theran Church in the West depended upon inducing people of that faith to settle in groups; upon a uniform doctrinal basis, rejecting the "Definite Synodical Platform"; upon using the English language as soon as possible; and upon using the same church books, forms, and ceremonies.⁶⁴ While deploring the unreasonableness of many Americans in demanding that the immigrants should speedily abandon their native language and all their religious manners and usages, he lamented the fact that a strong effort had been made by some immigrants, especially the Germans, to maintain their different languages and nationalities.⁶⁵

Harkey's views on doctrine and Americanization clashed with Springer's, who was a "one hundred per cent American" through and through. When Harkey arrived at Springfield he immediately found fault with the charter of the university, asserting that "the Lutheran Church would not touch it with a ten foot pole."⁶⁶ He caused it to be amended so that two thirds of the Board of Trustees should be Lutherans elected by the Synod of Illinois, the Synod of Northern Illinois, and such Lutheran synods as might later be admitted to participation in the control of the institution. The remaining one third were to be elected by the Board of Trustees from among the citizens of

⁶⁴ Editorial "How Shall the Lutheran Church in the West Arise?" in *Olive Branch*, January, 1856.

⁶⁵ Editorial "Union of Lutheran Churches in America," *Ibid.*, January, 1858.

⁶⁶ Springer, in *Lutheran Observer*, March 2, 1860.

Springfield.⁶⁷ When he presented himself for inauguration as professor of theology, Harkey insisted on a stricter obligation to the Augsburg Confession. Springer was not only liberal in doctrine from conviction but he also believed that by emphasizing the Lutheran character of the institution the good will of the citizens of Springfield would be sacrificed. He accused Harkey of playing up to the symbolical prejudices of the Scandinavians in the Synod of Northern Illinois⁶⁸ and denied that it was the intention of the

⁶⁷ *Lutheran Observer*, March 23, 1860.

⁶⁸ Harkey's partiality to the unaltered Augsburg Confession may possibly have been influenced in part by his knowledge that the Scandinavians were dissatisfied with the doctrinal position of the university. In December, 1854, at a conference of Swedish pastors at Andover a resolution was adopted inquiring of Harkey how theology was taught at Springfield and exhorting him to be faithful to orthodoxy. — E. Norelius, "Några Hågkomster från Året 1854," in *Korsbaneret*, 1888, p. 143. Norelius doubts the sincerity of Harkey's orthodox professions and hints strongly that his attacks on the Scandinavians after their separation in April, 1860, proves it. He also claims that the fact that W. M. Reynolds left the Lutheran Church and joined the Episcopal proves that he was never a good Lutheran. See Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika*, Vol. I., pp. 812 ff. The present writer believes that Norelius is arguing from false premises and that the later positions of these men can be explained on other grounds. Harkey's address on the occasion of his inauguration as professor of theology is printed in pamphlet form and is bound in Vol. V of "Lutheran Miscellanies" in the Gettysburg Theological Seminary library.

founders of Illinois State University to plant a center of influence that should Europeanize Americans. He expected the immigrants to become Americans.

A many-sided man, energetic, an able teacher, a good "money-getter," a student, and a "politician," Harkey won the confidence of the Scandinavians and the Americans.⁶⁹ As president of the General Synod he preached the convention sermon in 1859, in which he defended the unaltered Augsburg Confession, praised the great mission of unification of the General Synod, and deplored the "sectarian" tendencies of Missouri Lutherans, Iowa Lutherans, Wisconsin Lutherans, and others. America is not to be a nation of Englishmen, Germans, or Swedes, he said, but it is to be a new race.⁷⁰ In these years Harkey appears in the rôle of a conservative attempting to mediate between the symbolists, on the one side, and the "platformists," on the other. His fate was the one which usually overtakes the mediator. In the end he was branded a hypocrite and a trimmer by both factions.

Springer had a following among the anti-symbolical element in the Illinois synods, and his opposition made it unwise to elect Harkey permanent president of Illi-

⁶⁹ A letter from A. Andreen, a Swedish student at Illinois State University, to Norelius, March 8, 1855 (MSS.), praises Harkey as a teacher. This seems to have been the prevailing opinion. See also his letter to Erland Carlsson, February 9, 1860 (MSS.).

⁷⁰ Abstract of sermon, in *Lutheran Observer*, December 23, 1859.

nois State University. He remained, however, as professor of theology, also editing and publishing the *Olive Branch*. The selection of the "right" man for the presidency was a most difficult problem. He must be acceptable alike to the conservative Scandinavians and to the liberal Americans. It is doubtful if there was a living man equal to the occasion. The lot of reconciling almost irreconcilable differences fell upon Dr. W. M. Reynolds, who in certain respects was admirably qualified to attempt it.

We have seen that in the decade of the forties Reynolds was one of the recognized leaders of the conservatives in the General Synod. His purpose in writing for the *Lutheran Observer*, he says, was to advertise the fact that there was an element in the Church which that paper did not represent.⁷¹ At this time Reynolds had the unqualified confidence of Doctor Passavant who frequently turned to him for counsel. Reynolds encouraged him to establish the *Missionary* and later urged him to issue it weekly.⁷² On Passavant's first trip to the West in 1850 Reynolds accompanied him from Columbus, Ohio, lending real assistance.⁷³ In the public discussion held in Paul Andersen's church at Chicago, when the proselyting of Gustaf Unonius was aired, Reynolds showed ability of a high order in defending historic Lutheranism and in refuting the contentions of Unonius and his parti-

⁷¹ Gerberding, *Passavant*, pp. 166-168.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 329.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 209-211.

sans.⁷⁴ On this journey he again manifested the same interest in the Scandinavians that his writings in the *Evangelical Review* had revealed.⁷⁵ The first volume of this quarterly, of which Reynolds was editor, contained an informing article on the Swedish churches on the Delaware, the substance of which had been delivered in 1848 before the Lutheran Historical Society.⁷⁶ In 1852 the *Review*⁷⁷ contained his article on the Scandinavians in the Northwest, based partly on J. W. C. Dietrichson's *Travels among the Norwegian Emigrants to the United States of North America* (1846) and Gustaf Unonius' *Manual for Members of the Holy Catholic Church in Questions and Answers* (1846).

Doctor Reynolds' reputation as a scholar, editor, teacher, and conservative theologian won him the election in 1850 to the presidency of Capital University at Columbus, Ohio, an institution under the control of the Joint Synod of Ohio. When the celebrated Swedish nightingale Jenny Lind made a tour of the United States in 1852, Reynolds induced her to donate \$1,500 to endow a Scandinavian professorship at his institution in the hope that a goodly number of Scandinavian students would be attracted by it. Now as before he was a defender of conservative Lutheranism, writing articles along this line for the organ of the

⁷⁴ Gerberding, *Passavant*, pp. 216, 217.

⁷⁵ *Lutheran Observer*, October 25, 1850.

⁷⁶ *Evangelical Review*, Vol. I., pp. 161-199.

⁷⁷ Vol. III., pp. 399-418.

Joint Synod of Ohio, the *Lutheran Standard*.⁷⁸ Now as formerly he was a staunch believer in the mission of the General Synod, and it was his attempt to manoeuvre the Joint Synod into that body which led to his resignation of the presidency in the early autumn of 1854.⁷⁹ Difficulties of a personal nature also entered into the situation.

After leaving Columbus, Reynolds returned to the East and in 1855 purchased a Female Seminary at Allentown, Pennsylvania,⁸⁰ where he remained until the fall of 1857, leaving to assume the duties of president of Illinois State University. His election to this difficult office was no doubt a recognition of his interest in the Scandinavian branch of the Lutheran Church. He was personally acquainted with Esbjörn, Norelius, and Paul Andersen and he had been in correspondence with Hasselquist. As a student at Capital University Norelius had learned to know him. In 1851 Norelius had written to his spiritual adviser Esbjörn, deploring the fact that in Columbus he was deprived of the privilege of speaking Swedish. Esbjörn advised him to visit Doctor Reynolds and to speak Swedish to him. Esbjörn requested Norelius to

⁷⁸ *Lutheran Observer*, February 27, 1852; Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnas Historia i Amerika*, Vol. II., pp. 259, 260.

⁷⁹ Norelius, "Några Hågkomster från Året 1854," in *Korsbaneret*, 1888, pp. 138, 139; Norelius, "Hågkomster från 1855," *Ibid.*, 1889, pp. 107, 108.

⁸⁰ *The Missionary*, February, 1855.

pay his compliments to Reynolds and to say that he had long intended to write to him.⁸¹ The correspondence between Reynolds and Hasselquist indicates that they had many things in common. Hasselquist sent *Hemlandet* to him regularly, and Reynolds reciprocated by sending the *Evangelical Review*. Hasselquist sent Reynolds some copies of *Den Svenske Republikanen*, a paper edited and published by S. Cronsioe and bitterly opposed to Hasselquist and *Hemlandet*, in which Unonius was defended and the Swedish Lutheran pastors attacked. In return Reynolds sent some notes of which Hasselquist could avail himself in meeting the strictures of *Republikanen* and Unonius.⁸² "Our mutual friend and brother Andersen of Chicago has given me so favorable account of you that it will give me much pleasure to become better acquainted with you by correspondence even if we should never in this world see each other face to face," he wrote in 1857. "I take great interest in the prosperity of the Scandinavian branch of our church and was glad to hear from Br. A. that amid all difficulties and discouragements you are still making satisfactory progress in the right direction."

Doctor Norelius, writing a quarter of a century after the secession of the Scandinavians from Illinois State University, says that Doctor Reynolds, with all

⁸¹ Esbjörn to Norelius, November 11, 1851 (MSS.).

⁸² Manuscript letter, Allentown, Pennsylvania, June 18, 1857. This was written before Reynolds' election to the presidency of Illinois State University.

his learning, was a "vain, despotic, fault-finding person," and utterly incompetent as a college president. Less than mediocre as a speaker and preacher,⁸³ he was impractical and failed to gain the respect of the students. He was unable to enforce the strict discipline which he laid down, he continues, and sometimes made a fool of himself. He explains his desertion of the Lutheran Church in favor of the Episcopal, a year or two after the secession of the Scandinavians, on the ground that he was constantly clamoring for recognition and, failing to get what he conceived to be his due measure, he left.⁸⁴

Writing after the unfolding of events which entirely changed the course of Swedish Lutheran history, it was natural for Doctor Norelius to write as he did about Reynolds, but it is only justice to both sides of the controversy that developed during the Reynolds regime at Springfield to record that in his paper *Minnesota Posten*⁸⁵ Editor Norelius noted with satisfaction the election of Reynolds, mentioning the fact that he was acquainted with the Scandinavian languages and peoples. "We are personally acquainted with him

⁸³ As a student at Gettysburg Passavant was not impressed with Reynolds as a preacher. — Gerberding, *Passavant*, pp. 68, 69, 72.

⁸⁴ Norelius, "Några Hågkomster från Året 1854," in *Korsbaneret*, 1888, pp. 138, 139; Norelius, "Hågkomster från 1855," *Ibid.*, 1889, pp. 107, 108; Norelius, "Historiska Dokument med nödiga Förklaringar," in *Augustana Theological Quarterly*, 1903, pp. 194-197.

⁸⁵ November 7, 1857.

and esteem him very highly," he added. In order not to misrepresent Norelius, it should be stated that we have his authority for the statement that he heard of the election of Reynolds with consternation; that he felt that the result would be what it was; and that he warned Esbjörn to be on his guard, otherwise he would get into difficulties with the new president.⁸⁶

It has been thought necessary to dwell at some length on the character and personality of President Reynolds as a proper basis for understanding the situation that developed under his leadership. As the story unfolds it will be seen that the Scandinavians were disposed to place the blame on his shoulders for the misunderstandings which arose in connection with the Scandinavian professorship, which was the occasion at least, if not the cause, of the split which disrupted the Synod of Northern Illinois and seriously crippled the Springfield institution. That Reynolds had serious limitations as an executive is undoubtedly true; that another man at the helm would have steered the frail

⁸⁶ See Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika*, Vol. I., pp. 813, 814. In the *Olive Branch* (July, 1857) Harkey wrote that he had known Reynolds intimately for more than a quarter of a century, and although he did not agree with him in all minor points of doctrine, he esteemed him highly as a scholar, gentleman, and Christian. The addresses delivered at the inauguration of Doctor Reynolds, July 29, 1858, are printed in pamphlet form and are bound in Vol. VI of "Lutheran Miscellanies," in the Gettysburg Theological Seminary library.

craft safely through the angry doctrinal storms and would have avoided the dangerous shoals of nationalism and financial depression lies within the realm of conjecture. The historian can only relate the complicated story of the attempt at coöperation between men of varied doctrinal views, different intellectual attainments, and widely divergent traits and characteristics,—an experiment that commended itself to Christian men interested in giving to the Lutheran Church in the West its appropriate portion in building up the Kingdom of God. That the experiment ended in failure—dismal failure—is history; that it might have had a happier consummation had other instruments been employed is speculation. In the telling of it it is not easy to extenuate nothing and to set down naught in malice.

III

THE SCANDINAVIAN PROFESSORSHIP

Although the Swedish congregations were affiliated with the Synod of Northern Illinois, the pastors were conscious of the fact that their problems were quite different from those which faced the English congregations. The Swedish pastors were unable to serve English churches, and the American pastors could not adapt themselves to the needs of the foreign-language congregations. A few Swedish students were pursuing theological studies at Illinois State University, but the number was entirely inadequate to meet the needs of the expanding settlements. At the close of the year 1853 there were only four ordained Swedish ministers and two licentiates in the Synod of Northern Illinois; but at least twice that number was needed in the West alone and one or two were imperatively needed to work in New York City and vicinity.⁸⁷

In 1853 the four Swedish Lutheran pastors, Esbjörn, Hasselquist, Valentine, and Håkanson, organized the Mississippi Conference, a step which had been sanctioned at the second annual convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois October 11, 1852.⁸⁸ This, together

⁸⁷ *The Missionary*, December, 1853. See also *Ibid.*, January, September, 1852.

⁸⁸ *Minutes of the Second Session of the Synod of Northern Illinois, October 11, 1852.*

with the Norwegian Chicago Conference, gave the Scandinavians the opportunity to meet for edification and for the promotion of the welfare of their congregations. At the joint meeting of these conferences at Chicago in January, 1854, the membership of their churches had increased so rapidly that the Scandinavians constituted about two thirds of the membership of the entire Synod. The main business of the meeting centered around the methods of gathering the destitute countrymen into the church. The importance of this was impressed upon the convention by the presence of several lay delegates from struggling settlements, beseeching the conferences to send them ministers. There were seven such applications from Swedish settlements, and a like number from Norwegian communities. For a time it appeared that action would be taken to establish a paper in which equal space would be given to each language; but the project fell through because the pastors best qualified for the editorial duties, Erland Carlsson and Paul Andersen, both of Chicago, were too much engrossed in their pastoral duties to give proper attention to the work.⁸⁹ The desire for a Swedish paper was satisfied in January, 1855, when Hasselquist issued the first number of *Hemlandet* at Galesburg, Illinois. This ably edited

⁸⁹ Correspondence signed "A Lutheran in the West," in the *Missionary*, February, 1854. — Pastor Carlsson arrived at Chicago in August, 1853, and immediately assumed the duties as pastor of the Immanuel Swedish Lutheran Church.

paper was a great boon to the Swedish Lutheran Church. In May, 1855, the subscribers numbered six hundred, and in the following March the thousand mark was reached. The paper was both religious and secular in character, and its influence in promoting the work of the church and in molding public opinion among the Swedish-Americans can hardly be exaggerated.⁹⁰

The particularistic tendencies of the Swedes is further indicated by the reception into the Synod of Northern Illinois of the Swedish Lutheran Church in Warren County, Pennsylvania, on October 13, 1853. Although this congregation was within the territorial limits of another synod, the fact that its membership was confined exclusively to Swedish immigrants who would profit little by union with an exclusively English or German synod in Pennsylvania was considered sufficient reason for its admission in the remote Western synod.⁹¹ From the beginning, therefore, the Swed-

⁹⁰ Some idea of the work of *Hemlandet* may be gained from an article by George M. Stephenson, "Some Footnotes to the History of Swedish Immigration from about 1855 to about 1865," in *Yearbook* of the Swedish Historical Society of America, 1921-1922, pp. 33-52. The distribution of the Swedish population in 1855 is indicated in some degree by the subscribers to *Hemlandet*: Illinois, 397; Iowa, 59; Minnesota, 57; New York, 55; Indiana, 32; Pennsylvania, 15; Massachusetts, 5; Wisconsin, 4; Ohio, 2; Kentucky, 2. — *Hemlandet*, July 14, 1855.

⁹¹ *Minutes of the Third Session of the Synod of Northern Illinois, October 13, 1853.*

ish congregations were to constitute a nation-wide organization and were not to affiliate with district synods,—a circumstance which has made it somewhat difficult to adjust the relations between the Swedish Lutheran Church and the other synods. The earliest Swedish churches also used a liturgy differing from that which had been adopted in the American Lutheran churches. At the meeting of the Mississippi Conference at Moline, in January, 1853, a resolution was adopted recommending the use of the principal parts of the Swedish liturgy, which preserved the happy medium between the "tiresome length of the Episcopal liturgy and those liturgies which we have seen in our church in this country."⁹²

The dearth of Swedish ministers lay heavily on the hearts of the leaders of the church. The pastors in the field received many stirring appeals from countrymen to visit them to break the bread of life. Esbjörn, Hasselquist, Carlsson, Swensson, Cederstam, Norelius, Håkanson, and others in the first decade of Swedish Lutheran history were compelled to assume the rôle of circuit-riders, besides attending to the wants of the congregations to which they were regularly appointed. For instance, on a trip to Minnesota in 1854 Erland Carlsson preached seventy-two sermons and organized three churches,—one at St. Paul and two in the St. Croix Valley. Besides he visited Indiana twice and

⁹² Esbjörn to Passavant, January, 1853, in the *Missionary*, March, 1853.

made the beginnings of two congregations in that state.⁹³ It should not be forgotten, however, that the work of the ministers was in many instances ably supplemented by zealous laymen, who called the people together for worship in homes, where devotional books were read and sometimes informal discourses were delivered.⁹⁴

The Swedish pastors were evidently not entirely satisfied with the character of the theological instruction their ministerial candidates were receiving at Illinois State University, for at a conference at Andover in December, 1854, a resolution was adopted inquiring of Professor Harkey how theology was taught at Springfield and exhorting him to be faithful to orthodoxy.⁹⁵ In October, 1855, the United Chicago and Mississippi Conference held a meeting at Waverly, Illinois, previous to the meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois, when the Scandinavians discussed the advisability of establishing an institution to train ministers. The original suggestion was to send a man to Norway and Sweden to awaken interest in the church in America and to recruit ministers. The upshot of the discussion was the adoption of a resolution to bring before the Synod of Northern Illinois the advisability of sending a man to Scandinavia to enlist interest in Illinois

⁹³ Erland Carlsson to *Lutheran Observer*, printed in the *Missionary*, January, 1855.

⁹⁴ The *Missionary*, December, 1852.

⁹⁵ Norelius, "Några Hågkomster från Året 1854," in *Korsbaneret*, 1888, p. 143.

State University and in the general welfare of the Scandinavian churches. This resolution was a "feeler" to bring out the sense of the American brethren,⁹⁶ who received the suggestion with warm interest. The Synod appointed a committee composed of Doctor Harkey, the Rev. Erland Carlsson, and the Rev. E. Miller to bring in a resolution with reference to the establishment of a Scandinavian professorship at Illinois State University. The committee recommended the establishment of a Scandinavian professorship and suggested that an agent be appointed to solicit funds for the endowment in the United States and in Sweden and Norway and to induce ministers to immigrate to America. The report of the committee was adopted, and Esbjörn was commissioned to undertake the work; and in the event that he was unable to serve, Hasselquist was named as alternate. The trustees of Illinois State University were asked to confirm the appointment.⁹⁷ Paul Andersen, Erland Carlsson, and S. W. Harkey were named a committee to draw up an appeal in behalf of the project.

The convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois in 1855 was unusually harmonious. Norelius says that in this meeting the Synod reached the height of its flowering period.⁹⁸ But the "era of good feeling" was

⁹⁶ Norelius, "Hågkomster från 1855," in *Korsbaneret*, 1889, pp. 145-147.

⁹⁷ *Minutes of the Fifth Session of the Synod of Northern Illinois, October 5, 6, 1855*; the *Missionary*, November, 1855.

⁹⁸ Norelius, "Hågkomster från 1855," in *Korsbaneret*, 1889, pp. 144-147.

only the calm before the storm. Whether the harmony was only superficial, or whether the delegates did not fully realize what the establishment of the professorship entailed, or whether the distribution of the "Definite Synodical Platform" during the last days of the convention kindled the "evil fire" is difficult to determine. At all events, the Scandinavian professorship proved to be the rock which split the Synod of Northern Illinois and occasioned the organization of the Augustana Synod with its own institution of learning. The professorship, indeed, was not the sole cause of the differences which arose between the Scandinavians and the Americans; but it remained a constant source of bickering and backbiting. Its establishment was decided upon before the details of its relationship to the university were worked out; and when its status was finally determined, it was a clumsy arrangement couched in ambiguous terms. The fundamental difficulty was probably rooted in the mutual distrust which the "Definite Synodical Platform" awakened, but neither side exercised that patient tolerance and virtuous forbearance which the founder of the Christian religion taught to his disciples.

What evil tidings reached the ears of the American brethren in the winter following the Waverly meeting of the Synod is not entirely clear; but that it was a "winter of discontent" was revealed when a number of ministers united in a request to the president of the Synod to call a special meeting to define more precisely the terms and conditions of the Scandinavian professor-

ship. The Scandinavians understood that the professor was to confine himself to the teaching of theology and the Scandinavian languages.⁹⁹ They also demanded that he should bind himself to teach according to the Word of God and the unaltered Augsburg Confession. The "Americans" attached no such importance to the historic confession, and the extremists much preferred Schmucker's "Platform." They also looked to the effect that the commitment to an orthodox basis would have on the General Synod to which the struggling Western churches looked for financial assistance.¹⁰⁰

At the special meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois at Geneva, in May, 1856, the symbolists were in the saddle, and the Scandinavians won on every point. It was definitely decided that the Scandinavian professorship should be theological and that the professor would be required solemnly to promise to teach according to the Word of God and the Augsburg Confession. The Synod retained the right of nominating the individual to the chair, but the nomination was always to be in accordance with the wishes of the majority of Scandinavians in the Synod or in any other Evangelical Lutheran synod participating in the management and support of the university, and the Swedes

⁹⁹ Norelius, "Återblick på Augustana-Synodens Historia under dess Första Tjugufem År," in *Korsbaneret*, 1885, pp. 6-8.

¹⁰⁰ Norelius, "Hågkomster från 1856," *Ibid.*, 1890, pp. 111, 112.

and Norwegians were always to have equal rights and privileges pertaining to the professorship. It was further decided that the moneys collected by the agent had to be transmitted regularly to the treasurer of Illinois State University, with the stipulation that the principal was never to be used, but was to be invested at a rate of interest not less than 10 per cent on real estate security. While it was clearly stipulated that the professorship was to be theological—the object being to train men for the Gospel ministry—and that the professor should give instruction in the Scandinavian languages, he was also charged with the duty of instructing in the other branches of learning as the necessities of the institution might require.¹⁰¹ It should be noted that while the resolutions required the professor to render assistance in other branches, under the direction of the Board of Trustees, it was left an open question whether or not extra compensation should be granted for such services.¹⁰²

After the Geneva Waterloo the “platformists” were not entirely disheartened. They evidently hoped for a different outcome at the regular convention of the Synod to be held at Dixon, Illinois, in October. At this meeting the report of the committee on “last minutes,” composed of the Revs. George J. Donmeyer, B. G. P. Berglund, and Paul Andersen, signed by the first two members, recommended the reconsideration

¹⁰¹ *Minutes of the Extra Session of the Synod of Northern Illinois, May 8, 9, 1856.*

¹⁰² Esbjörn to Carlsson, December 4, 1860 (MSS.).

of the action on the Scandinavian professorship at the Geneva meeting. When Donmeyer submitted the report to Andersen for his signature, the latter retorted, "I would rather let you cut off my right hand, than subscribe to that document."¹⁰³

The report was a veritable bomb thrown into the assembly. The debate waxed so hot that it seemed that the Synod would split then and there. But Doctor Harkey, the president of the Synod, a man of peace and good judgment, whose measured words usually carried weight, calmed the storm by saying: "Well, brethren, if you are determined to split the synod, I tell you beforehand that I go with the Scandinavians."¹⁰⁴ After this solemn warning the report was recommitted to the same committee, augmented by the addition of Harkey and Esbjörn. This, of course, entirely changed the complexion of the committee, now composed of three symbolists to two "liberals." The augmented committee reported that they found nothing in the minutes of the extra session that required action at this meeting and proposed resolutions which

¹⁰³ Erland Carlsson, "Augustana-Synodens Läroanstalter. Inledning," in *Jubel-Album* (1893), pp. 123, 124. — The resolutions adopted by the United Scandinavian Conference at Chicago, April 23-27, 1860, when the Scandinavians decided to set up an independent synod, stated that at the Geneva meeting it was very evident that "We were not of the same mind, 'seeking the same things.' Our Synod has evidently not been united since that time."—*The Missionary*, May 17, 1860.

¹⁰⁴ *Jubel-Album* (1893), pp. 123, 124.

included the following conciliatory statement: "Resolved, That whilst we agree to coöperate with each other, as a Synod, . . . it is well known and distinctly acknowledged that there is not an entire agreement among ourselves on all minor points of doctrine and practice; and that whilst we guarantee to each other the most perfect and full liberty of conscience, and freedom of speech and action, when yielding in this or any other matters, to one portion of Synod, we do not consider the other members as pledged to the same doctrinal views."¹⁰⁵ This masterpiece of diplomacy (or evasion, if you prefer) was unanimously adopted by a standing vote. The committee also rejoiced in the good beginning that had been made in the matter of the professorship, and, acting on their suggestion, Hasselquist, Carlsson, and Andrewson were appointed a committee to have the matter in charge until the next meeting of the Synod.

On the question of the Scandinavian professorship the victory at Dixon rested with the Scandinavians, but it was not a victory gained without price. The resolutions were so worded that the responsibility for the endowment was placed on the Scandinavians themselves; and the resolutions lent themselves to the interpretation of those who were so inclined that they were passed solely to appease the "hyper-orthodox"

¹⁰⁵ *Minutes of the Sixth Annual Session of the Synod of Northern Illinois, October 9-13, 1856; the Missionary, November 13, 1856.*

element.¹⁰⁶ The Scandinavians were free to proceed with their undertaking, but under such conditions and on such terms that there could be little enthusiasm for it among the American brethren and great likelihood that a controversy might break out afresh at any time.

If the legal status of the Scandinavian professorship at Illinois State University was pregnant with strife and discord, the election of the Rev. L. P. Esbjörn to the chair was anything but reassuring to many minds. Esbjörn rightfully occupies a large place in the history of the Swedish-Americans and of the Swedish Lutheran Church. He was the first pastor; he was untiring in ministering to the spiritual and material needs of his countrymen; he had good judgment in certain matters; and he had a genuine interest in education and scholarship. But he had certain limitations which rendered him incapable of sustained coöperation with men whose opinions clashed with his and whose methods of accomplishing things did not square with his own. Coming to America with a distinct liberal tendency, his experience with proselyters like Unonius, Jonas Hedström, and others, who sought to win the Swedes away from Lutheranism, made him unduly suspicious of others and hardened him into an extreme symbolist. There is, of course, nothing in orthodoxy inconsistent with a healthy tolerance for other beliefs, but Esbjörn was not endowed with the gift of differing gracefully.

¹⁰⁶ Norelius, "Hågkomster från 1856," in *Korsbaneret*, 1890, pp. 111, 112, 132, 133.

Esbjörn seems never to have won the confidence of Hasselquist, but he was very well thought of by Norelius, Harkey, Passavant, and the Swedish pastors generally. In private letters and in the *Missionary* Passavant uniformly writes of him in the warmest terms, often referring to him as "that venerable father in Christ." Harkey likewise was much impressed with Esbjörn's work and ability, and as early as 1855 had him under consideration for the Scandinavian professorship and for an assistant professorship of mathematics.¹⁰⁷ He believed strongly that Esbjörn's experience as a pastor in the West had fitted him especially for the work of training ministers in this difficult field.¹⁰⁸

At the meeting of the combined Chicago and Mississippi conferences at Rockford, Illinois, in September, 1857, Esbjörn was nominated Scandinavian professor, upon which Hasselquist moved to decide the matter by lot; but Esbjörn objected to this rather frivolous method of election, saying that "We ought to weigh the matter before God, and then make our decision dictated by faith and conscience."¹⁰⁹ After a period of

¹⁰⁷ Esbjörn to Carlsson, November 3, 1855, in *Tidskrift för Teologi*, 1899, p. 281.

¹⁰⁸ *Olive Branch*, October 6, 1858.

¹⁰⁹ Carlsson, "Augustana-Synodens Läroanstalter," in *Jubel-Album* (1893), p. 124. — Fjellstedt, a prominent clergyman in Sweden, was Hasselquist's candidate. See Esbjörn's letter to Norelius, July 10, 1857, in which Hasselquist's opposition to Esbjörn's election is clearly indicated. At an informal meeting Hasselquist had given a long talk wherein

prayer Esbjörn was unanimously chosen. This election was practically equivalent to appointment, but according to the decision of the Synod of Northern Illinois, the "nomination" had to be confirmed by that body. So legally the election was in the hands of the Synod. Accordingly Esbjörn was elected at the annual meeting at Cedarville, October 1, 1857, and the Synod of Illinois was requested to hold an extra meeting to concur in the matter.¹¹⁰ This body, without a dissenting vote, approved of the choice,¹¹¹ and so did the Board of Trustees of the university.¹¹²

It must be evident even to a novice that this was an awkward method of choosing a member of the faculty in any institution; it made the incumbent partially independent of the president and the Board of Trustees, and it was not calculated to allow that calm deliberation which should precede the selection of a man to fill such an important position.

The terms upon which Esbjörn accepted the appointment were equally complicated and clumsy. In consultation with the committee appointed by the Synod of Northern Illinois, composed of Hasselquist

he stated that the professor should be not only learned but pious. Esbjörn wrote that he pretended to be so stupid that he did not understand the jibe at him.—*Tidskrift för Teologi*, 1899, p. 291.

¹¹⁰ *Minutes of the Seventh Annual Session of the Synod of Northern Illinois, October 1, 1857; Olive Branch*, quoted in the *Missionary*, July 22, 1858.

¹¹¹ *The Missionary*, September 23, 1858.

¹¹² *Olive Branch*, quoted in *Ibid.*, July 22, 1858.

and Carlsson, he agreed to devote three fourths of the year at the Springfield institution and, if health permitted, the remaining quarter as agent for the endowment fund. His yearly salary as professor was fixed at \$700 plus \$50, with traveling expenses, for the work as agent. The committee recommended that the Synod concur in a petition to the King of Sweden, asking him to authorize the lifting of a collection in the churches of his realm for a term of years. In addition to this possible source of revenue, an annual contribution of \$25 in support of the professor was to be paid by each Scandinavian congregation. These recommendations of the committee were approved by the Synod, with the stipulation that the contributions were to be paid directly to the professor; and in the event that the total sum did not equal the amount of the professor's salary, the treasurer of the university was authorized to make up the deficiency from the interest on the endowment fund.¹¹³

The work of collecting money for the endowment fund proceeded very slowly. At the extra meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois at Geneva in 1856 it was decided that Esbjörn's visit to Sweden and Norway in behalf of the endowment should be postponed for a year;¹¹⁴ but from 1855 he had labored in the field gathering subscriptions. The individual contri-

¹¹³ *Minutes of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois, September 17, 1858.*

¹¹⁴ *Minutes of the Extra Session of the Synod of Northern Illinois, May, 1856.*

butions were necessarily small, ranging from \$1 to \$6, with most of them in the \$1, \$2, and \$3 class.¹¹⁵ In the hope of better success the United Chicago and Mississippi Conference at Princeton, Illinois, in September, 1858, appointed Erik Norelius to visit the East to enlist supporters for the cause as well as to solicit subscriptions for the support of needy Scandinavian students,¹¹⁶ but conditions in the financial world were such that it was deemed inadvisable to undertake the work. In fact the hard times which followed in the wake of the panic of 1857 wrecked the prospects of many projects.

The expectations for substantial aid from across the water were dashed when it was learned that the King of Sweden had denied the petition for collections. Norelius wrote to Passavant that some enemy had interceded with the king in the wrong way. *Hemlandet* deplored the action of the sovereign, in view of the fact that the Swedish-Americans bore a warm feeling for Sweden and its king and were children of the Lutheran Church.¹¹⁷ On motion of Professor Esbjörn the General Synod in 1859 adopted a resolution recommending him in his efforts to collect funds.¹¹⁸

At the annual convention of the Synod of Northern

¹¹⁵ The subscription lists are published in *Hemlandet*.

¹¹⁶ *Tidskrift för Teologi*, 1899, pp. 98, 99.

¹¹⁷ The *Missionary*, April 21, 1859; *Hemlandet*, May 11, 1859.

¹¹⁸ *Pittsburgh Gazette*, quoted in the *Missionary*, June 2, 1859.

Illinois at Chicago in September, 1859, the report of the committee on the professorship was indeed pessimistic.¹¹⁹ The endowment had not increased during the year, and only \$358 had been realized from contributions from the congregations. The report of the treasurer of the university showed that the principal of the fund was \$1,382.40.¹²⁰ It can easily be imagined that under these circumstances not the least of the worries of the Scandinavian professor was the problem of providing for himself and family of six.

The obstacles in the way of building up an adequate endowment for their professorship were ample causes for worry and dissatisfaction among the Scandinavians; but the administration of the principal by the treasurer of the university made matters even worse. From the beginning the Scandinavians wished to retain control over the fund, but this was opposed because it implied lack of confidence in the university and because the Scandinavian Conference could not furnish proper security.¹²¹ In voting to turn the fund over to the treasurer of the university the Synod of Northern Illinois instructed him to make loans on real estate security double the amount of the principal and

¹¹⁹ Carlsson, Norelius, and Hatlestad comprised the committee.—*Minutes of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois, September 13, 1859.*

¹²⁰ Hasselquist to Harkey, July 23, 1861 (MSS.).—The subscriptions amounted to \$2,640. *Hemlandet*, July 25, 1860.

¹²¹ "Vår Kyrkliga Ställning här i Landet," in *Hemlandet*, July 25, 1860.

at an interest rate of 10 per cent. The principal was not to be expended for any purpose. Notwithstanding at the meeting of the United Chicago and Mississippi Conference at Geneseo, Illinois, in September, 1859, it was reported by a committee that a citizen of Springfield had borrowed \$456.70 without proper security and that \$253.96 had been allowed to lie idle for a certain time.¹²² In the light of these revelations the Conference asked that the fund be turned over to the sole control of a committee composed of members of the Chicago and Mississippi conferences.

At this meeting Professor Esbjörn who had assumed his duties at Springfield in September, 1858, gave his first report; and it contained abundant evidence that he was far from satisfied with his position. He complained that he was compelled to teach subjects that had no relation to the Scandinavian professorship; that there was no Scandinavian Lutheran church in Springfield; that there were no opportunities for the Scandinavian students to gain practical experience in congregational work; that the students were hard pressed for money; and that not all of his salary had been paid. He closed, however, by asking enthusiastic support for the great undertaking which was of such great significance for the Lutheran Church.¹²³

The Conference officially deplored that the pro-

¹²² *Tidskrift för Teologi*, 1899, p. 117.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 112-114.

fessor's time was occupied with duties foreign to those contemplated in his appointment and requested the faculty and trustees of the institution to remedy the situation. The protest bore fruit, and the professor was relieved of his "foreign" duties, with the exception of chemistry.¹²⁴ Further dissatisfaction with the state of affairs at the university can be read in the resolution exhorting the professors to use only orthodox textbooks in church history, dogmatics, symbolics, and pastoral theology in the Scandinavian languages.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ "Vår Kyrkliga Ställning här i Landet," in *Hemlandet*, July 25, 1860.—The Scandinavians felt that it was unjust to load Esbjörn up with teaching hours without extra compensation, when Reynolds and Susserott, his colleagues, were devoting considerable time to teaching in their own private enterprise, a Female Seminary. It was alleged that the authorities at the university, in order to prevent Esbjörn from widening the breach that was beginning to appear, resorted to the strategy of burdening him with secular subjects so that he could find no time for theology. The charge may be true, but the present writer has found no documentary evidence to substantiate it. See Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872*, p. 167.

¹²⁵ *Hemlandet*, July 25, 1860.

IV

DOCTRINAL CONTROVERSY IN THE SYNOD OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS

The difficulties which developed in connection with the Scandinavian professorship at Illinois State University were administrative, financial, doctrinal, and personal; and they cannot be understood without reviewing the course of events as they unfolded before and after Professor Esbjörn's arrival at Springfield in the autumn of 1858.

We have seen that Esbjörn joined the Synod of Northern Illinois after some hesitation and then only after safeguarding the doctrinal position of his churches by having printed in the minutes of the Synod a statement of their doctrinal basis. He felt it necessary to take the same precaution when the Synod affiliated with the General Synod the following year. It was only the dire necessity of establishing synodical connections for the Swedish churches, coupled with the hope that the increasing strength of the symbolists would overwhelm the "new measure" men, that dictated his action.

The lapse of only a year was necessary for the realization of Esbjörn's expectations, for at the third annual convention of the Synod at Galesburg, Illinois, a committee report recommending an amendment to

the constitution striking out the words "mainly correct" as applied to the Augsburg Confession was adopted,¹²⁶ and the following year the word "correct" was substituted.¹²⁷ The Synod was now committed to the unaltered Augsburg Confession. At the same meeting a committee of which Esbjörn was a member recommended the following formula to be used in connection with the admission of church members who had been members of other churches: Do you acknowledge the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice and the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism as containing a correct summary of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion?¹²⁸ That the symbolists had the upper hand was again revealed at the Dixon meeting of the Synod in October, 1856, when the delegates of the Synod to the next meeting of the General Synod were instructed to discourage and oppose the introduction into the General Synod of the controversy relating to the symbols of the Church and the "Definite Synodical Platform."¹²⁹

That the doctrinal trend was satisfactory to the

¹²⁶ *Minutes of the Third Session of the Synod of Northern Illinois, October 13, 1853.*

¹²⁷ *Minutes of the Fourth Session of the Synod of Northern Illinois, September 8, 1854.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *The Missionary*, November 13, 1856. See letter with reference to this action, from J. Christopher Frederick, Lyons, Iowa, to Erland Carlsson, October 29, 1856 (MSS.).

Scandinavians can be read in the resolutions of the United Chicago and Mississippi Conference adopted at Chicago, January 9, 1854.¹³⁰ With reference to the efforts that were being made to discredit the Synod of Northern Illinois and to make it appear un-Lutheran,¹³¹ the Scandinavians went on record as declaring that not only did the constitution of the Synod accept the Augsburg Confession but also all the constitutions for individual congregations. Moreover, it was stated that in the instruction of children and of confirmands the books used in the Lutheran churches in the Scandinavian countries were used in the Scandinavian-American churches.

It was about this time that Esbjörn wrote to Norelius, who was seriously thinking of joining the Joint Synod of Ohio, that time had vindicated his action in joining the Synod of Northern Illinois; that the Scandinavians had wielded a strong influence; and that the constitution had been amended.¹³² This letter notwithstanding, Esbjörn was never entirely at ease in the Synod of Northern Illinois. According to Erland

¹³⁰ *Protocoll hållet vid ett gemensamt möte af Chicago och Mississippi Evang. Lutherska Conferensen i Chicago från den 4de till och med den 9de januari 1854.*

¹³¹ Such efforts were continually being made by leaders in the Missouri Synod and in the Norwegian Synod.—Cf. Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872*, pp. 165, 166.

¹³² Esbjörn to Norelius, March 5, 1855, in *Tidskrift för Teologi*, 1899, pp. 272-274.

Carlsson, in 1858 Esbjörn wrote a letter to a friend of such a character that it ought to be preserved for the future as a testimonial about our stand with reference to the division in the church. God preserve each of us from such a spirit as Esbjörn's letter reveals, wrote Carlsson, so that there may never arise a spirit of separation in the Swedish branch of our church. He hoped that the letter would have the same effect upon Esbjörn's correspondent as upon himself and that he would not feel disposed to begin any opposition.¹³³

The liberal concessions along doctrinal lines in the matter of the Scandinavian professorship were also gratifying to the Scandinavians; and it is probable that the uninterrupted string of victories made them somewhat dictatorial and overconfident. Certainly it was with more than a shadow of truth that in the stormy years that followed the "platformists" could say that it was not their party but the Scandinavians that had changed the doctrinal basis of the Synod,¹³⁴ and that the only error they made was in conceding too much.¹³⁵ Be that as it may, after 1856 the "Americans" were becoming increasingly restless; and when their ranks were recruited by eight ultra "new measure" men in 1857 and in 1859, their opposition to confessional Lutheranism, supplemented by the pun-

¹³³ Carlsson to Hasselquist, May 12, 1858 (MSS.).

¹³⁴ Springer, in *Lutheran Observer*, June 8, 1860; *Ibid.*, May 25, 1860; "An Egyptian," *Ibid.*, February 3, 1860.

¹³⁵ *Lutheran Observer*, June 15, 1860.

gent polemics of the *Lutheran Observer* and of Francis Springer, became formidable and exceedingly irritating to the Scandinavians.¹³⁶

Francis Springer's article in the *Evangelical Review* for July, 1859,¹³⁷ on "Lutheranism in the United States" appeared two months before the meetings of the United Scandinavian Conference and the Synod of Northern Illinois at Chicago, and was a veritable red flag in its critical attitude towards the "European Lutherans, with their tenacity of language, European ecclesiasticism, and worship of symbols." "The declaration of Augsburg," he wrote, "is the exponent of the degree of intellectual and social development of which the most active and vigorous race of mankind was then capable; and that instrument is scarcely more the property of the Lutheran Church than it is of the entire race. But, though it is a fixed point in human progression, we are not hence to infer that progression itself has been arrested and can advance no further. It is the right, nay, the duty of any generation having attained a clearer light and superior advancement over preceding generations, to mark, by a suitable monument, the point of progress they have reached.... The people of a subsequent generation may, of right,

¹³⁶ Norelius, "Historiska Dokument," etc., in *Augustana Theological Quarterly*, 1903, pp. 196, 197; Paul Andersen, in *Norsk Luthersk Kirketidende*, printed in *Hemlandet*, April 18, 1860; "Vår Kyrkliga Ställning här i Landet," in *Hemlandet*, July 11, 1860.

¹³⁷ Vol. XI, pp. 96-110.

make a new declaration, standard or confession; or, if not quite prepared for this, they may proclaim a qualified adherence to the one made previously. The latter alternative has been chosen by the great body of Lutherans in America."

These words from the outstanding leader of the "Americans" in the Synod of Northern Illinois bore a significance not to be passed over lightly. Not for one moment could the symbolists admit that the Augsburg Confession was an antiquated document: that it had been superseded by the superior knowledge of succeeding generations or that one jot or tittle should be altered. They would never recede one step from the position that the framers of the Augsburg Confession had formulated for all time the tenets of the Christian religion. What was the truth in Luther's generation was the truth in theirs and would be the truth in the church of their children.

When the delegates to the convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois assembled at Chicago in September, 1859, the atmosphere was surcharged with controversy. Each side watched the other with eagle eyes. The "new measure" men took the initiative by moving to amend the constitution to restore it to its former latitudinarian basis. After much acrimony, the proposition was voted down; but the movers, nothing daunted, petitioned for honorable dismissal from the Synod in order to form a synod of their own. This last state was worse than the first. Again Doctor Harkey stepped into the breach and offered a sub-

stitute which, after a lengthy and spirited discussion, was withdrawn. The original petition was then voted upon and rejected. The upshot of it all was the formulation of the much discussed "preamble," which included the substance of the constitutional demands of the would-be separatists without formally altering the basic document.¹³⁸ In other words, in order to retain the Synod intact, there was a balm in the qualifying clause, or "preamble," for the "platformists" and comfort for the symbolists in the constitution as such. Since final action on the "preamble" was held over until the next meeting of the Synod, it was the apple of discord for several months. The steadily growing power of the symbolists had driven the "Americans" into a corner where they were compelled to state their doctrinal position formally. The "preamble" was Springer's article stated in concise and precise language. The Scandinavians, on the other hand, were manœuvered into a position which called for plain speaking on their part. Under the incessant attacks of the Missouri Synod and of the Norwegian Synod the Scandinavians in the Synod of Northern Illinois had

¹³⁸ *Minutes of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois, September 13, 14, 1859*; Norelius, "Historiska Dokument," in *Augustana Theological Quarterly*, 1903, pp. 196, 197; "Abstract of Proceedings of the Synod of Northern Illinois, September 9-13, 1859," by D. S. Altman, secretary of the Synod, in *Lutheran Observer*, October 7, 1859; Philip Melancthon, Jr., in *Lutheran Observer*, June 8, 1860; manuscript draft of Hasselquist's reply to *Lutheran Observer*, not dated.

insisted that their organization was truly Lutheran; but now they were struck dumb by the "preamble." If their professions of loyalty to the Lutheran symbols were sincere, action, rather than words, was now in order. Paul Andersen, the able Norwegian pastor at Chicago, who had been a liberal of the liberals, praising the broad-mindedness of the *Lutheran Observer* and admiring the doctrinal laxity of the General Synod, now wrote in *Norsk Luthersk Kirketidende*¹³⁹ that the "platformists" revealed their true colors at Chicago by the motion to put the substance of their proposed constitutional change in the "preamble." He said that the time had come for the Scandinavians to do something more than "witness" for the truth. They must act.

One extreme begets another. The leaders of both factions glowed with righteous indignation. Had not the Scandinavians revealed their true colors at Chicago? So thought a correspondent writing in the *Lutheran Observer*¹⁴⁰ under the pseudonym "Philip Melanchthon, Jr." When the Americans, some of whom were the oldest men in the Synod, asked permission to withdraw, they were denounced as pseudo-Lutherans. Such was the tyrannical spirit manifested by the leaders of the Scandinavians, he said, that some of "Mr. Passavant's conservative men" looked on with amazement; they could hardly believe their own

¹³⁹ *Hemlandet*, April 18, 1860. Cf. Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872*, pp. 165, 166.

¹⁴⁰ June 8, 1860.

ears, and their "conservatism" well nigh "went up," for they severely rebuked it; and he was not sure but that the rebuke "did not sting to this day." Harkey told Reynolds that he was much discouraged about what transpired at Chicago. Esbjörn, wrestling with his own problems at Springfield, wrote to Hasselquist that he did not like the "preamble" any more than he [Hasselquist]; but as it seemed to be the only way to get peace for the present, he would bide his time to see how things worked out. The Americans talk a great deal about freedom and tolerance, he continued, but they do not practice what they preach. This, together with a lack of spirituality, has caused me many times to wish that we would separate from them and organize our own institution at Chicago.¹⁴¹

Another incident at the Chicago meeting was not calculated to promote harmony. The German Wisconsin Synod had sent delegates to this convention with the view of sounding the prospects of their body affiliating with the Synod of Northern Illinois. Naturally they were eager to learn the precise doctrinal basis of the Synod; and when the symbolists assured them that it was bottomed on the unaltered Augsburg Confession, the American brethren, with very few exceptions, protested that they were not quite so willing to declare their unqualified reception of the historic document.¹⁴²

¹⁴¹ Esbjörn to Hasselquist, October 22, 1859 (MSS.).

¹⁴² "Abstract of the Proceedings of the Synod of Northern Illinois," by D. S. Altman, in *Lutheran Observer*, October 7, 1859.

At the Chicago convention the cleavage between the factions was clearly defined. From that time there were two groups of secessionists—the “platformists” and the symbolists—each working to the same end: the disruption of the Synod of Northern Illinois, with Francis Springer marshalling the forces on the one side and L. P. Esbjörn on the other. Both men were convinced that separation was to be preferred to a “cat and dog” existence within the same household. Springer maintained that the sectarian jealousies were imported into the Synod by the “high church” Lutherans who came in after the Synod and the university had been founded. “If they are more intensely Lutheran than we are, it is not our intention to molest them—if they will leave us alone,” he wrote.¹⁴³ “We delight in union which acknowledges and respects the rights of the individual.” The “Americans” claimed, with some reason, that the doctrinal position of the Synod had been changed by the Scandinavians, both by amending the constitution and by establishing the Scandinavian professorship, and that if the symbolists had permitted the organization of a new synod and had pursued the proper course in relation to the university, the two parties might have continued to coöperate.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Communication signed “Illinoian” and written by Springer, in *Lutheran Observer*, January 20, 1860. See *Olive Branch*, February, 1860.

¹⁴⁴ “An Egyptian,” in *Lutheran Observer*, February 3, 1860; E. Fair, *Ibid.*, March 23, 1860.

The fact that the "preamble" was stoutly opposed by the symbolists did not make it any more palatable to the ultra "new measure" men, like Francis Springer, Eli Fair, and D. S. Altman, who continued to agitate in favor of a separate synod. Springer was especially active through correspondence, complaining that the old Synod and the university were in the hands of the European state church, hyper-orthodox symbolists, who called his party "little theologians," "puritans," "Methodists," "extremists," and the like.¹⁴⁵

In order to patch up the differences and prevent the consummation of a movement which would cripple the university, Professor Harkey, a consistent friend of the Scandinavians and a believer in confessional Lutheranism, was instrumental in calling a special meeting of the United Rock River and Mendota Conferences of the Synod of Northern Illinois at Dixon, December 6-8, 1859.¹⁴⁶ Harkey got wind of the plans of Springer who had been a harsh critic of the former's "high-handed denominationalism." Distrustful of his ultra-liberal enemy, Harkey mustered all his resources to deal a crushing blow to his schemes.

Harkey's *coup d'état* at the Dixon Conference was a bold public exposure of the contents of letters in the hands of several members of the Conference, proving that efforts were being made to alienate the English churches from Illinois State University and to foment

¹⁴⁵ *Olive Branch*, February, 1860.

¹⁴⁶ E. Fair, in *Lutheran Observer*, March 23, 1860; Esbjörn to Norelius, December, 1859 (MSS.).

a separatist movement.¹⁴⁷ The Springfield professor proved himself master of the situation. The Conference resolved that it was satisfied with the doctrinal basis of the Synod, provided the "preamble" were adopted at the next meeting of the Synod; that it was satisfied with the doctrinal position of Illinois State University; and that it condemned the organization of a new synod.¹⁴⁸

In order to counteract the propaganda of the separatists "An Appeal" to the ministers of the Synod of Northern Illinois, signed by Harkey and eight others, was published in the *Olive Branch*¹⁴⁹ and in part in the *Lutheran Observer*.¹⁵⁰ The "Appeal" maintained that the doctrinal differences in the Synod were minor. With reference to the contention of the "new measure" men that it would be "more pleasant if all members used one language," it was objected that this was not sufficient reason for separating and weakening the Church still further. Springer was challenged to

¹⁴⁷ *Olive Branch*, printed in *Lutheran Observer*, March 23, 1860; *Olive Branch*, February, 1860; Springer, in *Lutheran Observer*, March 2, 1860.

¹⁴⁸ "Abstract of Proceedings of the United Rock River and Mendota Conferences of the Synod of Northern Illinois at Dixon, December 6 to 8, 1859," and editorial comment, in *Olive Branch*, December 24, 1859.

¹⁴⁹ December 24, 1859.

¹⁵⁰ February 20, 1860. The *Observer* opposed separation, arguing that it was advantageous to have larger synods and a spirit of compromise and latitude, which was the basis of the General Synod.

present his proofs that the Scandinavians were trying to foist the entire symbolical system on the Synod. The Scandinavians were given a clean bill.¹⁵¹

The decisive defeat of the separatists at the Dixon conference was a bitter pill, and the public controversy which followed was not calculated to heal the wounds that had been inflicted at Chicago and Dixon. The "new measure" men, discredited and defeated, in order to defend themselves, placed the responsibility for their action on the high-handed and overbearing manner of the Scandinavians.¹⁵² Their rapier-like thrusts in the *Lutheran Observer* were not lost on the Scandinavians and made them apprehensive for the future and more than ever distrustful of their American brethren. Hasselquist wrote to Harkey that it was no wonder that the Scandinavians were fearful of the future, knowing as they did of the efforts to organize a new synod by those who feared that the dreadful Old Lutheranism would dominate the Springfield institution. They were also aware of the blunt hinting of the *Lutheran Observer* that the Old Lutheranism would be able to hold out only a few years longer and then be compelled to yield to the New Lutheranism.¹⁵³ Esbjörn was inclined to doubt that the "new measure"

¹⁵¹ Cf. Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika*, Vol. I, pp. 804, 805.

¹⁵² Springer, in *Lutheran Observer*, March 2, 1860; "Illinoian," *Ibid.*, January 20, 1860; "An Egyptian," *Ibid.*, February 3, 1860; E. Fair, *Ibid.*, March 23, 1860

¹⁵³ Hasselquist to Harkey, April 9, 1860 (MSS.).

men were reassured by Harkey,¹⁵⁴ since they were so wrought up over Springer's articles. The correspondence made public at Dixon convinced him more than ever that the two parties could not reconcile their differences.¹⁵⁵ Even Harkey, who bore the brunt of the attack at Dixon, lost the confidence of some of the Scandinavians.¹⁵⁶ His position was a most difficult one. In trying to calm the fears of the "new measure" men he used words which the Scandinavians interpreted as reflections on them;¹⁵⁷ and thus, one by one,

¹⁵⁴ Esbjörn to Hasselquist, January 12, 1860, in *Augustana Theological Quarterly*, 1903, pp. 199, 200.

¹⁵⁵ Esbjörn to Hasselquist, February 7, 1860, *Ibid.*, pp. 202, 203.

¹⁵⁶ Jonas Engberg to Norelius, February 7, 1860 (MSS.). Engberg, who was one of the editors of *Hemlandet*, wrote that through its appeal in the *Olive Branch* the Rock River Conference had sought to reflect on the Scandinavians. Paul Andersen answered "defining the position of the Scandinavians" for insertion in the *Olive Branch*. Harkey wrote back for permission to make some changes, but Andersen refused. As finally printed Harkey omitted the clause "the unaltered Augsburg Confession, as explained in the other symbolical books."

¹⁵⁷ Harkey to Hasselquist, March 31, 1860 (MSS.): "I have been made to suffer much...and especially on account of my friendship for the Scandinavians and Germans, and my efforts in their behalf; but what pains me most is the fact that it now seems I am to be attacked also on the side of the Scandinavians! O this is almost enough to break my heart; and, my Dear Brother, I now need your prayers as perhaps I never did before, that I may have grace for the severe trial."—It should be pointed out that Harkey

the ties that united the Scandinavians and Americans weakened and threatened to give way. It is significant that Doctor Reynolds, writing after the secession of the Scandinavians and when his administration of affairs at Illinois State University was given as one of the major causes of the defection, admitted that the agitation of certain men who wanted to form an "elective affinity synod" on the ground that the Synod and institution were in the hands of foreigners and symbolists was one of the causes that excited the Scandinavians and led to their abrupt withdrawal from the General Synod.¹⁵⁸ In a sense, the Scandinavians in forming a separate synod in 1860 were but emulating what their opponents had unsuccessfully attempted a few months before. Which party was the more unreasonable and high-handed depends largely upon the point of view of the individual.

It would seem that the year 1859 could hardly have produced any more causes for dissension within the Lutheran Church, but such is the fact. At the meeting of the General Synod in May of that year, about four months before the stormy Chicago meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois, that body was plunged into a profound discussion by the application of the Melancthon Synod for admission. This body occupied an unsatisfactory position with reference to the Augsburg Confession. It was agreed on all sides that

wrote this letter immediately after learning of Esbjörn's resignation as Scandinavian professor.

¹⁵⁸ Reynolds to Hasselquist, October 29, 1857 (MSS.).

no synod could be admitted into the General Synod without acknowledging its adhesion to the Augsburg Confession. The "platformists," however, contended that the general body did not bind its members to an unqualified reception of the document, but they did not deny that it knew of no other creed. The upshot of the discussion was the admission of the Melanchthon Synod, but not on clear and explicit terms.¹⁵⁹

The admission of the Melanchthon Synod was not without heavy opposition, but the fact that it was admitted at all was convincing to the Scandinavians that a majority in the General Synod was willing to compromise with false doctrine.¹⁶⁰ In other words, it was another link in the series of events that spelled disaster for a united Lutheran Church.

From time to time the attention of the reader has been called to the fact that certain Lutheran synods outside of the General Synod were sowing discord within the Synod of Northern Illinois by attacking the alleged "unholy alliance" between the Scandinavians and the "Americans."¹⁶¹ The Missouri Synod,

¹⁵⁹ *Evangelical Review*, Vol. XI., pp. 39-43 (July, 1859).

¹⁶⁰ *Hemlandet*, June 1, 1860; Esbjörn to Norelius, January 26, 1860 (MSS.).—Esbjörn mentioned the admission of the Melanchthon Synod as one of the reasons why the Scandinavians should withdraw from the General Synod. The vote on the admission was 98 to 26, with Esbjörn, Hasselquist, Reynolds, and Klove (Norwegian) in the negative. *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Convention of the General Synod at Pittsburgh, Pa.*

¹⁶¹ Cf. Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872*, pp. 162 ff.

through its organ *Der Lutheraner*, was probably the most effective and undoubtedly retarded a reconciliation between the Scandinavians in the Synod of Northern Illinois and their countrymen in the Norwegian Synod. *Kirkelig Maanedstidende*,¹⁶² the organ of the Norwegian Synod, said that "the Norwegians and Swedes who belong to the Synod of Northern Illinois no doubt believe themselves Lutherans, but they are deceived—they have been deceived into becoming members of a Reformed Church."

Doctors Reynolds and Harkey, always alive to the needs of Illinois State University, were very anxious to bring about a *rapprochement* between the Scandinavians in the two synods. Shortly after assuming the office of president at Springfield, Reynolds wrote to Hasselquist making inquiry if he had had any intercourse with the Norwegian Synod people. "I made the elder bro. Preus a visit some years since, and was very favorably impressed in regard to him," he wrote. "Could we not by proper representation and acquaintance secure their coöperation?"¹⁶³ In the first weeks of the fateful year 1859 he wrote again: "You will see in the next number of the *Olive Branch* a communication from Rev. Preus, President of the Norsk Wisconsin Synod, complaining of Brother [Paul]

¹⁶² January and February, 1854, quoted in A. A. Stomberg, "Early Efforts at Scandinavian Church Union in America," in *Yearbook* of the Swedish Historical Society of America, 1923-1924, p. 17.

¹⁶³ Reynolds to Hasselquist, October 29, 1857 (MSS.).

Andersen's letter from Norway and in which he puts Br. A. in a pretty tight place in some points. It is a great pity that these brethren have so greatly misunderstood each other. Is it not possible in some way to reconcile them? I have recently had a very friendly letter from Preus, to which I replied in the same spirit, endeavoring also to lay the foundation for a better understanding. The Missourians are now the principal obstacle in our way, and I have a suspicion that their desire to keep the Norwegians under their influence is the secret motive of their attacks upon Dr. Harkey and myself during the last year, . . . I think that if you Swedish brethren could have some personal intercourse with these brethren in Wisconsin, you might succeed in enlightening them in regard to the state of affairs in our Synod and institutions."¹⁶⁴

Whether through the good offices of Reynolds (who was present) or otherwise, eleven Scandinavian pastors from the Synod of Northern Illinois and ten pastors from the Norwegian Synod met at Vor Frelzers Kirke at Chicago on July 7 and 8, 1859. It is probable that the men from the Synod of Northern Illinois had small hopes for immediate results, knowing beforehand that the condition for union on the part of the Norwegian Synod men was that the former leave the General Synod "head over heel."¹⁶⁵ Professor Esbjörn was chosen to preside over the meeting.

¹⁶⁴ Reynolds to Hasselquist, January 18, 1859 (MSS.).

¹⁶⁵ Letter from Norelius at Chicago, in the *Missionary*, April 21, 1859.

It was agreed on all hands that a union of men speaking kindred languages and professing allegiance to the Augsburg Confession was desirable; and in doctrine there was unanimous agreement in everything but the XIV article of the Augsburg Confession, the Norwegians holding that exhortation and praying of laymen publicly in church could be allowed only in cases of necessity, whereas the Illinois Synod men believed that this should be allowed at all times under careful supervision of the pastor. The main point of issue, as was anticipated, centered around the General Synod. The Norwegians maintained that the General Synod stood on an even "lower basis" than the Prussian State Church, and they could not understand how the brethren of the Synod of Northern Illinois could accept unconditionally the Augsburg Confession in the sense of the other symbolical books and consistently affiliate with the General Synod. The other party contended that although it was regrettable that the Augsburg Confession was not distinctly mentioned in the General Synod constitution, yet they believed it was there, and by strong implication, too. They further argued that the general body had only advisory power; and were it otherwise, and should that body become dictator, they would immediately withdraw. They regretted the laxity of views in some portions of the General Synod, but they loved to see the Lutheran Church becoming more and more united and consolidated, and they would have patience and hope for better things.

Although the discussion at times was spirited, it

never lost its Christian and gentlemanly character. Rejoicing in having become better acquainted and in having found that they stood nearer to each other than was formerly supposed, the delegates resolved formally not to decry each other as heterodox, to refrain from encroachments on each other's congregations, and to meet at some suitable place in the future.¹⁶⁶

It is significant that at this meeting the Scandinavians in the Synod of Northern Illinois professed loyalty to the General Synod, in spite of the fact that a short time previous the loose Melancthon Synod had been admitted; but the events that transpired at the Chicago and Dixon meetings later in the year were beyond their ken. What impression the strictures of the Norwegian Synod men against the General Synod may have had we are not in a position to fathom; but it can be conjectured that the ability of the Norwegians, who were trained in strict symbolism at the University of Christiania, in portraying the dangers of union with "heretical" synods must have awakened doubts in the minds of men who were as loyal to the Augsburg Confession as their erstwhile opponents. Reynolds may have regretted the day he urged the Scandinavians to come closer together. Certainly the events of the next eight months had little comfort in store for him.

¹⁶⁶ This account is based on Norelius' report of the meeting in the *Missionary*, August 4, 1859. — Norelius was one of the secretaries and was, therefore, in a position to render an accurate account.

Another synod that aided the Missouri Synod and the Norwegian Synod in embarrassing the Scandinavians in the Synod of Northern Illinois was the Joint Synod of Ohio. The organ of this synod, the *Lutheran Standard*, was ultra-symbolical and directed sledgehammer blows at the unionistic General Synod. This paper singled out the Swedes for special praise and thus by contrast sought to win them away from dangerous company.

In the end events played into the hands of the Missourians, the Norwegians, and the Ohioans. The Springerites in the Synod of Northern Illinois forced the Scandinavians to take a firmer stand against latitudinarianism, largely because it was just such an eventuality which the opponents of the General Synod had predicted.

V

THE MINNESOTA SYNOD

Before we are ready to relate the final chapter in the extended series of misunderstandings which led to the secession of the Scandinavians, we must turn our attention to a set of circumstances that had arisen in the far distant Minnesota, a state which was destined to become the home of thousands of Swedes and the most important center of influence in the Swedish Lutheran Church.

Erik Norelius, then a student at Capital University, whose work in Minnesota deserves as much praise as that of Esbjörn, Hasselquist, and Erland Carlsson in Illinois, made his first journey to Minnesota Territory in the spring of 1854. About a year later he made a missionary tour to the same home mission field, organizing Swedish churches at Red Wing and Vasa.¹⁶⁷ At that time there were only three Lutheran ministers in the entire territory: Cederstam at Chisago Lake, Wier, a German pastor, at St. Paul, and Thomson, the first Lutheran preacher in Minnesota to officiate in English exclusively, near Cannon City.¹⁶⁸ At Stillwater Norelius found about thirty Swedes, mostly in-

¹⁶⁷ *The Missionary*, November, 1855.

¹⁶⁸ *Hemlandet* (December 22, 1855) names only the first two.

different to religion; at Marine Mills there was a Swedish settlement three or four years old, comprising something in the neighborhood of two or three hundred Swedes; and at Chisago Lake he found the largest Swedish settlement in the United States, including about five hundred souls.¹⁶⁹

At the time of the latter journey Norelius was serving the Swedish Lutheran churches in Indiana, with headquarters at West Point, Tipton County,¹⁷⁰ although he was not ordained pastor until October, 1856. The young man was evidently impressed with the need for religious workers in the newer Swedish settlements, for in the spring of 1856, after preaching his farewell sermon to his countrymen in Indiana and after they had "mingled their tears together," he departed for Minnesota in the hope of meeting in the future many of his former parishioners in his new field of labor.¹⁷¹ Norelius was called as pastor of the congregations at Red Wing and Vasa; but he unstintingly gave of his time and energy in ministering to the pioneer settlements in the surrounding territory. The early Swedish settlements were established in three areas: the valley of the Cannon River, the valley of the St. Croix, and the valley of the St. Peter's (later called the Minnesota River).¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, December 1, 1855.

¹⁷⁰ Abstract of the Report of the Home Mission Bureau, in the *Missionary*, April 24, 1856.

¹⁷¹ Letter of Norelius, *Ibid.*, May 8, 1856.

¹⁷² Letter of Norelius, *Ibid.*, August 14, 1856.

It was in the summer of 1856, not long after Norelius came to Red Wing and Vasa, that the Rev. Mr. Passavant, the zealous friend of the Swedes, made his celebrated journey to Minnesota. At Red Wing Passavant procured a buggy and drove to the humble cabin in Vasa, which served as the home of Norelius and his young wife. Although the pioneer and the editor were strangers to each other, they met as old friends. Passavant passed the night in the frail cabin, and for hours the brethren conferred about the "interests of Zion" among the Scandinavians. Passavant learned that at every point of importance the Scandinavians were settling, and while the Methodists and Baptists had some six or eight persons who were licensed as ministers and supported by societies in New York, there were but two Swedish Lutheran pastors for the whole territory. At St. Paul, where he stayed eight days trying to obtain a free lot for a church edifice and soliciting contributions, Passavant found a little band of Swedes who met in a schoolhouse every Lord's day to listen to the reading of a sermon.¹⁷³ Returning to Pittsburgh with first hand information, Passavant in season and out urged upon the Eastern churches the imperative necessity of lending financial assistance to the cause of home missions, and he was in constant correspondence with Norelius.¹⁷⁴

From the beginning Norelius was conscious of the

¹⁷³ Passavant, "Notes of a Tour to Minnesota," in the *Missionary*, September 18, 25, October 9, 1856.

¹⁷⁴ The *Missionary*, October 22, 1857.

vast distance separating him and the Swedish brethren in Illinois, and immediately he began to lay plans for the prosecution of his work in a way peculiarly adapted to Minnesota conditions. He and Passavant had discussed plans for an academy to train ministers; but as the money for this undertaking was not in sight, he hoped to seek out a half-dozen or more promising young men to instruct them on his "claim," where they could work on the farm for their board and clothing.¹⁷⁵ He also believed that a Swedish paper in Minnesota could do for the Swedes in that state what *Hemlandet* was doing for the cause on the other side of the Mississippi. Accordingly, on November 1, 1857, the first number of *Minnesota Posten* appeared at Red Wing, under the editorship of Norelius. The editorial announcement stated that the paper was to be devoted to "Politics, Religion, Literature, General and Local News, and has special reference to the Americanization of the Swedish people in this country."¹⁷⁶ In politics it was to be independent and in religion it would advocate the principles of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, "yet without bigotry and sectarian jealousy."¹⁷⁷ In reply to a letter of Passavant inquiring how he managed to start the paper, the editor wrote

¹⁷⁵ Extract from a private letter from Norelius to Passavant, in the *Missionary*, October 9, 1856; *Ibid.*, March 12, 1857.

¹⁷⁶ *Minnesota Posten*, November 30, 1857.

¹⁷⁷ "Prospectus of *Minnesota Posten*," a one-page broadside signed by Norelius.

that he hardly knew himself. Through some kind friends, and especially citizens of Red Wing, he received a little material aid to procure type; and although he had no press, he was allowed to use one "on good faith."¹⁷⁸

Norelius' plunge into the uncertainties of journalism was undertaken over the opposition of Passavant¹⁷⁹ and Hasselquist, especially the latter.¹⁸⁰ Passavant believed the venture was premature, and Hasselquist feared that it would blight the success of his pet child *Hemlandet*. These fears proved to be well grounded, and within a year it was decided to consolidate the Illinois and Minnesota papers under the editorship of Norelius, with the publication office at Chicago.¹⁸¹ Norelius' health proved unequal to the arduous duties, and in the fall of 1859 he resigned to resume for a time his pastoral work among the Swedes in Indiana.

We have seen that Norelius was never happy in the Synod of Northern Illinois, and it was but natural that in his remote field of labor in Minnesota he should have felt even less interest in that organization. In his history of the Swedish Lutheran congregations, he wrote:¹⁸² "At this time the spiritual needs of the Swedish people in the country were nowhere so great

¹⁷⁸ *The Missionary*, March 4, 1858.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, December 24, 1857.

¹⁸⁰ Norelius to Hasselquist, July 2, 1858 (MSS.).

¹⁸¹ *The Missionary*, December 23, 1858; March 17, 1859.

¹⁸² *De Svenska Luterska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika*, Vol. I., p. 848.

as they were in Minnesota; the few pastors were absolutely overwhelmed by the work; and it cannot be denied that there was reason for feeling that both the Synod and the Conference dealt with us in a step-motherly fashion. It does not matter that this was not done intentionally; the fact is that on account of the distance the pioneer Minnesota settlements were regarded as creatures of the Synod that had to take things as they came."

The man who was directly and indirectly responsible for the organization of a Lutheran Synod in Minnesota was the Rev. Mr. Passavant. His heart was set on a synod that would unite the Swedish, Norwegian, German, and American brethren in one body. Towards the close of the year 1857 he had secured the services of the veteran missionary to India, "Father" C. F. Heyer, for pastoral work among the German- and English-speaking Lutherans in St. Paul and vicinity. His immediate objective was to serve the German Lutheran congregation and to build up an English congregation. Passavant urged Norelius to coöperate in every possible way with Heyer and requested him to call on him and to encourage the Swedes in St. Paul to attend services.¹⁸³

Passavant and Heyer were in constant correspondence with reference to the proposed synod, but the matter was to be kept secret until all parties concerned

¹⁸³ Manuscript letters from Passavant to Norelius, October 23, November 11, 1857; February 18, 1858.

had been "felt out." Passavant asked Norelius' opinion about the proposal, at the same time pointing out the advantages that would accrue to the Swedes from such an organization. "By forming such a Synod on the true Lutheran basis, the difficulty which you contend with in virtue of your present Synodical connection would cease, and the long and expensive journeys would no longer exist," he wrote. "It is true you would also lose the advantage of the counsel and guidance of men like Esbjörn and Hasselquist, but it cannot be expected that the brethren in Minnesota will always be able to make these long journeys to Illinois. Please, therefore, give me your views fully on this subject and at the same time write a letter of inquiry to Bro. Esbjörn and Hasselquist, so that no step be taken without these worthy fathers, who have done so much for the welfare of the Scandinavians."¹⁸⁴

"Father" Heyer went about his work in a direct, soldierly fashion. He corresponded with the Lutheran pastors in the state to get their reactions. At first he had in mind a meeting in St. Paul; but a letter from the Rev. William Thomson, a pastor residing at Prairieville, about six miles south of Cannon City, inviting him to hold the meeting at that place, appealed to him.¹⁸⁵ Thomson had been laboring in Minnesota under the auspices of the East Ohio Synod for over three years and during that period he had not had the

¹⁸⁴ Passavant to Norelius, February 18, 1858 (MSS.).

¹⁸⁵ Heyer to Norelius, March 14, 1858 (MSS.); Thomson to Norelius, March 8, 1858 (MSS.).

pleasure of meeting a single Lutheran minister. Thomson was an ardent "New Lutheran," a through and through General Synod man.

Norelius, always an orthodox symbolist, was rather dubious about inviting Thomson into the synod. He wrote to him asking him for a statement of his doctrinal views. Thomson replied that he was sorry to learn that "we shall differ with regard to a doctrinal basis, upon which to form a Synod for the Northwest. . . . For my own part honesty and candor compel me to state to you that I am most decidedly opposed to symbolism and formalism and fully satisfied with the doctrinal basis of the General Synod. . . . I am heartily sick of this church controversy and hope the breach may be healed by mutual concessions from both parties, in such a way as not to bind the conscience of the brethren of either side to anything which in their judgment is manifestly wrong."¹⁸⁶

Heyer, on the other hand, was positive that the proposed synod must adopt the unaltered Augsburg Confession.¹⁸⁷ He feared that Thomson, like many of the American Lutherans, was not a sound theologian, "but if he were connected with an orthodox Lutheran Synod his superficial views might undergo a change and he become more and more convinced of the soundness and scriptural correctness of the true Lutheran doctrine."¹⁸⁸ The veteran missionary believed that there should be

¹⁸⁶ Thomson to Norelius, May 5, 1858 (MSS.).

¹⁸⁷ Heyer to Norelius, April 14, 1858 (MSS.).

¹⁸⁸ Heyer to Norelius, April 21, 1858 (MSS.).

no delay in forming a synod. "At present there is a decided majority in favor of the unaltered Augsburg Confession,—if we wait a Synod on a different basis may be formed—but by going ahead now, this could not be done so easily," he wrote.¹⁸⁹ "I do not see how the formation of a new Synod at present could have an unfavorable influence on the Swedish portion of our church. At present in the new Synod, the Swedish members would constitute the majority—nor do I perceive how it could be a disadvantage to the Northern Illinois Synod."

From the material available it is rather difficult to tell exactly what Norelius' views on the new synod were.¹⁹⁰ Perhaps he was not entirely clear, torn as he was by the many-sided views that were presented to him. It appears, however, that while he was not unwilling to affiliate with the proposed body, he believed that the ideal solution was the organization of a Swedish synod for the entire United States,¹⁹¹—an eventuality that came to pass very shortly. If, however, separation from the Synod of Northern Illinois could not be effected, he was strongly inclined in favor of a Swedish conference in Minnesota.

We have seen that Passavant, with his usual wisdom and courtesy, advised Norelius to take counsel of Esbjörn and Hasselquist before embarking on a venture

¹⁸⁹ Heyer to Norelius, April 24, 1858 (MSS.).

¹⁹⁰ See *De Svenska Luterska Församlingarnas och Svenskarnes Historia i Amerika*, Vol. I., pp. 840 ff.

¹⁹¹ Norelius to Cederstam, April 14, 1858 (MSS.).

that might alienate those brethren. Hasselquist was unqualifiedly opposed to the plan. He was fully conscious of the difficulties that beset the Scandinavians in the Synod of Northern Illinois, and especially the Swedes in Minnesota, but he believed that prudence dictated that they bide their time in hopes of better things. In his judgment the Swedes were better off in the General Synod than in any contacts they might make with the Joint Synod of Ohio or with the "state church" Norwegian preachers. He also believed that a separate Scandinavian synod would be unwise, partly because in the long run the Scandinavians could not remain independent and partly because in an English synod they had the privilege of maintaining their own liturgy and discipline as long as necessary. So long as the Swedes were unable to support an independent institution of learning he thought it would be a false step to do anything to cripple the struggling institution at Springfield.¹⁹² It should also be pointed out that Hasselquist felt a strong attachment to the leaders in the General Synod, who were uniformly kind and considerate in their dealings with him.

Esbjörn felt that it was quite natural that the distant Lutherans should desire a separate organization, but he looked to the larger aspects of the question and advised against it, although he was not so hotly opposed as Hasselquist. It is possible that he wavered

¹⁹² Hasselquist to Norelius, April 18, 1858 (MSS.); Norelius to Hasselquist, July 2, 1858 (MSS.); *Hemlandet*, June 22, 1858.

at times; at any rate Hasselquist accused him of favoring separation.¹⁹³ Esbjörn denied that, so far as he remembered, he had ever encouraged it,¹⁹⁴ and rather reproved Hasselquist for questioning his motives, asserting that there was no reason for becoming so wrought up over it in any event.¹⁹⁵

Another consideration which carried weight with a certain element among the Swedes was the situation in which their churches would be placed in the event of a split in the Synod of Northern Illinois—a possibility that by 1858 had become a strong probability. If the differences between the “new measure” men and the symbolists precipitated a secession by one faction or the other, the boundaries of the synods would closely follow lines of nationality, with the Scandinavians, whether in the old body or the new, constituting a separate organization. In that event the Scandinavians in the older settlements would find themselves in a nationalistic synod and the Swedes in Minnesota in a “mixed synod.” “It seems to me wise and necessary for us to stand united until the differences in our

¹⁹³ Esbjörn wrote to Norelius, June 15, 1858: “Jag fick en lex af honom [Hasselquist] för det jag, som han trodde, understödt bildandet af en Minnesota Synod.”

¹⁹⁴ Esbjörn to Hasselquist, May 8, 1858 (MSS.). — Esbjörn wrote to Norelius, July 15, 1858, that Hasselquist had contradicted himself in the matter of the Minnesota Synod: that he had expressed himself one way here and another there.

¹⁹⁵ Norelius' work, Vol. I., pp. 841 ff., gives extracts from letters of Esbjörn, Hasselquist, and Erland Carlsson.

Synod are fought to a conclusion," wrote Erland Carlsson to Norelius. "Besides, as a people we have so many other interests in common that we ought under no circumstances to separate. How shall we administer the affairs of our church among our people if we are drawn into separate synods harboring Germans and Americans?"

In the meantime Passavant, after consultation with Hasselquist and certain other brethren in the Synod of Northern Illinois, had reluctantly abandoned his cherished plans for a Minnesota Synod out of deference to the wishes of the Swedish leaders. On May 18th (1858) he wrote to Norelius:¹⁹⁶ "While it is not pleasant for flesh and blood to see his cherished plans thwarted for a season it is of the first importance to the welfare of the Scandinavians in Minnesota that they receive all the 'aid and comfort,' the counsel and coöperation of the older heads, who have borne the heat and burden of the day and are strong in influence not only here, but in the church abroad. In regard to the importance and the prosperity of an organization *on the ground*, there is no change of opinion in my mind—but *for the sake of unity*, which is of vastly more importance than all local gains—I think, dear brother, it is your duty to yield to the advice and counsel of the brethren in Illinois. Even on the supposition that they may not and cannot see things as they really are in Minnesota,—it is better to suffer elsewhere,

¹⁹⁶ Manuscript.

than to have any division in our weak forces—among brethren of the same church. How would this plan operate: At your conference in Red Wing—instead of the organization of a synod, let a kind of Lutheran Church Union (or conference) be organized which would meet annually for mutual conference and co-operation—without assuming synodical power—the the brethren meanwhile remaining in their former Synodical connection. Something of this kind would be very helpful all around and would prepare the way for the speedy organization of a Synod. . . . At the same time, I would suggest that the convention which meets in Red Wing should recommend to the Northern Illinois Synod at its next session to form the Scandinavian ministers in Minnesota into a conference of the Synod.”

We get an insight into the negotiations that were on foot in another letter from Passavant to Norelius, dated June 26th,¹⁹⁷ less than a fortnight before the scheduled meeting at Red Wing: “A long letter from Br. Hasselquist coincides with what you write, that our Swedish brethren in Illinois would doubtless be willing to see a new Synod organized in Minnesota—if it were connected with the General Synod. This I take for granted would be the case, for we all see and feel that the General Synod is most rapidly assuming a most hopeful Lutheran character—as the radical brethren only too plainly see. But notwithstanding

¹⁹⁷ Manuscript.

this, it would perhaps be best to form only a Lutheran Church Union, at present, and work along in this way for a year or so."

In the midst of divided counsels eight pastors and six laymen met in the Swedish Lutheran church at Red Wing, July 3 to 5, 1858. Of the pastors four were Swedes, and of the laymen five were of that nationality.¹⁹⁸ "Father" Heyer was elected chairman and Wm. Thomson was made secretary.¹⁹⁹ On the question, "Is it expedient at the present time to organize a Lutheran Synod for Minnesota?" the English and German brethren expressed themselves warmly in favor. The Swedes, while heartily approving of the formation of the Synod, stated, in the form of a resolution, that before they could make any decision they would have to consult with their brethren at the next meeting of the United Chicago and Mississippi Conference.

The Germans and Americans, despite this discouragement, proceeded to organize the Minnesota Synod, while the Swedish pastors and laymen withdrew and held an informal "convention" to discuss the problems which confronted them. At the meeting of the United Chicago and Mississippi Conference at Princeton, Illinois, in the following September, and at the meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois at Mendota, im-

¹⁹⁸ E. Norelius, P. Beckman, P. A. Cederstam, and P. Carlson.

¹⁹⁹ *The Missionary*, July 15, August 12, 1858.

mediately following that, the Minnesota Swedes were positively forbidden to join the Minnesota Synod. The latter body resolved formally that the Synod for several weighty reasons wished the brethren to remain for the present in connection with that organization, and permission was granted to them to organize a separate conference within the Synod of Northern Illinois.²⁰⁰ In making this concession both the Conference and Synod were but responding to the sense of the informal Swedish "convention" at Red Wing. "It was thus not without some affliction that the Minnesota Conference was born into the world," writes Norelius.²⁰¹ The recommendation was carried out at Chisago Lake, Minnesota, October 7 and 8, 1858.²⁰²

After the organization of the Minnesota Synod and the Minnesota Conference there were two bodies within the General Synod competing in the same territory, and friction in certain matters of church discipline and of synodical jurisdiction were almost certain to arise,—and did arise very shortly. In the early part of 1860 a Mr. B. G. P. Bergenlund, who had been a licentiate in the Synod of Northern Illinois, had obtained promise from ministers in the Minnesota

²⁰⁰ *The Missionary*, October 21, 1857; *Minutes of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois, September 19, 1858*.

²⁰¹ Norelius, Vol. I., p. 848.

²⁰² Protokolls Bok för Minnesota Konferensen af Skandinaviska Ev. Lutherska Augustana Synoden i Nord Amerika, 1858-1884, in manuscript, is in the Norelius collection.

Synod that he would be relicensed or ordained at the next meeting of that body. The man in question had been a trouble-maker in the Swedish congregations, and as a consequence had been deprived of his licensure. He then played into the hands of the "sect-makers" by slandering his former co-laborers.²⁰³ Naturally the Swedish pastors looked with suspicion on a body that would take into its bosom a man of that character. The *Missionary* believed that Bergenlund's reception into the Minnesota Synod would be "most ruinous to the unity of our Swedish churches in that state, and in direct violation of the order of Christ's house."²⁰⁴

The organization of the Minnesota Synod and the dissensions that arose in connection with it contributed in no small measure to the separation of the Scandinavians from their American brethren in the Synod of Northern Illinois. By revealing the particularistic tendencies of the Swedes it foreshadowed an independent Scandinavian synod, which Norelius and Esbjörn favored, and it hastened the movement in that direction by adding one more to the list of misunderstandings that were accumulating with the passing of each month. It was a symptom of separation as well as a cause. To quote Norelius: "What restrained us

²⁰³ On Bergenlund's career in the Synod of Northern Illinois see Norelius, Vol. I., pp. 162 ff.

²⁰⁴ March 8, 1860; Wm. Thomson, secretary of the Minnesota Synod, to E. Norelius, secretary of the Minnesota Conference, July 9, 1860 (MSS.); Erland Carlsson to Hasselquist, September 22, 1860 (MSS.).

from joining the Minnesota Synod was simply the sentiment of nationality. We felt the compelling force of the argument that we Swedes must stand united. It was this that we had desired the whole time but could see no realization of it within the Synod of Northern Illinois.”²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ Norelius, Vol. I., p. 848.

VI

THE SPRINGFIELD IMBROGLIO

If the discussion in the preceding pages has been to any purpose, it must be evident to the reader that unless something unforeseen intervened to change the course of events a schism in the Synod of Northern Illinois was inevitable. The signs were ominous. With a perspective of half a century it is clear that only a spark was needed to fire the train. We now turn our attention to Springfield, Illinois, to see how events shaped themselves at Illinois State University, where the conflagration was kindled.

It will be recalled that the Rev. Mr. Esbjörn assumed his duties as professor of the Scandinavian language and literature in September, 1858, after some hesitation about accepting the appointment owing to the dubious financial status of the professorship.²⁰⁶ Esbjörn's appointment seems to have given general satisfaction throughout the Synod; President Reynolds and Professor Harkey were especially elated.²⁰⁷ In announcing Esbjörn's arrival at Springfield Harkey's *Olive Branch*²⁰⁸ observed that "Our Synods in Illinois and this institution are founded upon the liberal

²⁰⁶ Esbjörn to Norelius, July 15, 1858 (MSS.).

²⁰⁷ *Olive Branch*, October 6, 1858.

²⁰⁸ October 6, 1858.

basis of the General Synod. Here we all stand in our coöperation with each other. . . If there must be fighting about non-essential points of doctrine, we in this institution and in Illinois are not the men to do it." A week after his arrival in Springfield and about a year before Esbjörn assumed his duties Reynolds wrote to Hasselquist²⁰⁹ that he had read with special interest the proceedings of the late Scandinavian Conference.²¹⁰ "Your plans generally strike me as judicious, but especially that for the appointment of a Scandinavian professor," he said. "I am glad to see that the recent meeting of Synod²¹¹ has so unanimously confirmed your nomination of Br. Esbjörn to that post. My long and intimate acquaintance with that brother assures me that you could not well have selected a man better adapted to the situation. I do not know how far his knowledge of Norske [*sic*] will meet the wants of our Norwegian Brethren, but as he had already when I last saw him. . . made very respectable progress in English, I presume that he is still more familiar with the closely allied dialect of Norway. At all events, I shall be very glad to welcome him to this place as a colleague, and trust that his labors will be abundantly blessed." The first four months of Esbjörn's work at the university evidently measured up to the expectations of the president, for on January 18, 1859,²¹² he

²⁰⁹ October 29, 1857 (MSS.).

²¹⁰ September, 1857, when Esbjörn was nominated for the professorship.

²¹¹ At Cedarville, October 1, 1857.

²¹² MSS.

again wrote to Hasselquist that "he more than meets our anticipation in regard to his efficiency. It is of course difficult to say how far he meets the wants of the Norwegian students, but as far as I can learn they are well satisfied. But he does far better in English than I had ever dared to hope, both in the literary and in the theological department."

Outside of dissatisfaction with his salary and teaching program and with the husbanding of the funds of the Education Society,²¹³ an organization for the benefit of indigent students, during his first year at Springfield Esbjörn appears to have been much better satisfied than he was the succeeding year. At least his correspondence shows less evidence of discontent with local conditions, although he was much disturbed over synodical affairs.²¹⁴ With the beginning of the next academic year (September, 1859), however, the professor constantly complains of his situation. It would appear, therefore, that the events that transpired at the Chicago²¹⁵ and Dixon²¹⁶ meetings

²¹³ Esbjörn to Norelius, November 11, 1858 (MSS.): "When you send anything to Dr. Harkey, who is treasurer of the Education Society, do not forget to state positively that it is to be used for the benefit of indigent Scandinavian students."

²¹⁴ Carlsson to Hasselquist, May 12, 1858 (MSS.). — Esbjörn's annual report of September, 1859, reveals considerable discontent, but the personal element is not in evidence.

²¹⁵ September 9 to 13, 1859.

²¹⁶ December 6 to 8, 1859.

preyed on his mind and that it was easy for him to interpret events at Springfield in the light of these occurrences. Even before the opening of the school year he was meditating on the removal of the professorship to Chicago.²¹⁷

The situation in which the Scandinavian professor found himself was not an enviable one. With the finances of the university in deplorable shape due to the severe financial stringency following the panic of 1857,²¹⁸ with an uncertain income because of the inability of the Scandinavian congregations to pay their twenty-five dollar contributions,²¹⁹ with a family of six to support, and with some twenty poverty-ridden Scandinavian students for whom he felt himself responsible,²²⁰ little wonder that his spirits were low.

²¹⁷ Esbjörn to Norelius, July 28, 1859 (MSS.).

²¹⁸ Reynolds to Hasselquist, February 7, 1859 (MSS.); the *Missionary*, March 15, 1860. — At an extra meeting of the Board of Trustees, February 26, 27, 1860, it was decided to move the university from Springfield unless the citizens of that city subscribed \$15,000 to pay the debt. The income of the university was only about equal to one half the expenses. The *Missionary*, March 21, 1860.

²¹⁹ The committee on the Scandinavian professorship reported to the Synod of Northern Illinois, September 13, 1859, that only \$358 had been raised towards the professor's salary and that it had been necessary to draw on the interest of the endowment. Esbjörn wrote to Hasselquist (April 2, 1860) that lack of funds was one of the most obvious reasons for resigning.

²²⁰ See Esbjörn's explanation of his resignation in the *Missionary*, July 19, 1860. A communication from Esbjörn to

It is doubtful whether Esbjörn and the Scandinavian students ever felt really at home in Springfield. The city was remote from the Scandinavian settlements, which were located more largely in Northern and Western Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. The population was almost exclusively American; and when the university was located there, the city could not boast of even a Lutheran church, to say nothing of a Scandinavian church. The Scandinavian population of the university was thus deprived of that best possible antidote for lonesomeness: access to the homes of people whose language, customs, and antecedents were the same. Replying to Norelius' invitation to spend the Christmas season in his home at Attica, Indiana, Esbjörn wrote that he and his wife were anxious to get out of "this cage" to enjoy a little freedom among friends and countrymen, because nobody knows how "unhappy we are here."²²¹ He was "tired of the doings of the Americans and their spiritual outlook."²²² "I am making this trip to get away from *Springfield-boerna* for a few days," he said²²³ To Hasselquist he wrote²²⁴ that an experience of a year and a half had convinced him that all the Americanization the Scandi-

Hemlandet (November 23, 1859) gives the number of Scandinavian students as twenty.

²²¹ "Hur vi här vantrifvas."—November 15, 1859 (MSS.).

²²² December, 1859 (MSS.).

²²³ November 28, 1859 (MSS.).

²²⁴ February 7, 1860 (MSS.).—The letter is printed in *Augustana Theological Quarterly*, 1903, pp. 202, 203.

navian students needed could be obtained from an English tutor in a small institution under "our control." "But worst of all is the evil effect of the environment here on the piety and morality of the students," he said. "It will not do to have our ministerial candidates at a mixed institution, with American young men of all sorts, doctrine or no doctrine." He cited the case of a student who told him that he could translate from German and Latin into English, but not into Swedish. He asserted that if the students did not leave Springfield, they would become more like the Americans than anything else.

Esbjörn was undoubtedly unduly fearful of the "Americanizing" agencies at work on the Scandinavian students. We may be certain that it was not a comfortable thing for the Scandinavians to know that among a certain element of the university and city population they were looked upon as plebeians²²⁵ and stigmatized as "green Swedes"; but we may be equally certain that there was on Esbjörn's part a nationalistic prejudice which caused him to see matters in a false light and to suspect things that existed only in his own imagination. He reveals his state of mind by writing to Norelius that they were in a "sort of Babylonian captivity."²²⁶

²²⁵ Norelius to Cederstam, February 14, 1860 (MSS.).

²²⁶ October 26, 1859 (MSS.). — A communication to the *Lutheran Observer* (February 24, 1860) signed "Western," in reply to communications from "Illinoian" and "Egyptian," denied that there was suspicion and hostility against "for-

The addition of subjects foreign to theology and the Scandinavian languages to the professor's teaching burden was a real grievance, although according to the terms on which the professorship was founded other subjects might be assigned to him, provided there was no interference with his regular duties. The strenuous protest of the Scandinavians resulted in the reduction of the teaching hours to twenty-five, including four hours of chemistry.²²⁷ This was an improvement over the previous year and showed a disposition on the part of the administrative officers of the university to make things more pleasant, but still there was ample cause for dissatisfaction.

The cumulative effect of the local situation, coupled with the unsettled and irritating state of affairs within the Synod of Northern Illinois, especially after the eruptions at Chicago and Dixon, caused Esbjörn to lose confidence in Reynolds and Harkey. We have seen that in the hope of conciliating the "platformists" at these meetings, some of the conservative American brethren proposed the much-discussed "preamble" and

eigners" at Illinois State University. The writer said that the theological professors lived in perfect harmony.

²²⁷ Esbjörn to Norelius, November 15, 1859 (MSS.); "Vår Kyrkliga Ställning här i Landet," in *Hemlandet*, July 25, 1860. In the catalogue of Illinois State University for 1858-1859 Esbjörn is designated as "Professor of Scandinavian Languages, Chemistry, Astronomy, etc."; but in the catalogue for 1859-1860 he is designated as "Professor of Scandinavian Languages."

certain constitutional amendments to come up for final action at the next annual meeting of the Synod. Conceived in a spirit of conciliation, the result of these proposed measures was to place these men, including Reynolds and Harkey, in a wrong position before the Scandinavians by creating the impression that with them peace was before principle. Esbjörn's reaction may be seen in a letter to Norelius,²²⁸ in which he wrote that Doctor Reynolds was coming out more and more as a "new Lutheran" and that he could not accept his professions of orthodoxy for anything but hypocrisy. To Hasselquist he wrote that it was strange that Harkey should have been able to reassure the "new measure" men at the Dixon conference, since they were so wrought up over Springer's articles.²²⁹ As if this were not enough, Harkey and Reynolds became the targets for the most bitter shafts from the "Americans," poisoned by irritating remarks about the foreign element in the Synod, in the columns of the *Lutheran Observer*.²³⁰

Neither the Scandinavians nor the "platformists" understood the trying circumstances in which Harkey and Reynolds were placed. As stewards of the Synod in charge of its struggling educational institution they could not afford to jeopardize its future still more by

²²⁸ March 19, 1860 (MSS.).

²²⁹ January 12, 1860, in *Augustana Theological Quarterly*, 1903, pp. 199, 200.

²³⁰ Articles and communications by Springer, Fair, "Philip Melancthon Jr.," and "Egyptian," cited above.

engaging in controversy. In the hope that the evil fire would burn itself out they maintained silence, with the result that Esbjörn and his correspondents concluded that they were afraid to stand up for the right, or else that they were insincere.²³¹ Even Paul Andersen became so irritated at "these reckless Americans" that in a letter to Esbjörn he said that the time seemed to be ripe to give attention to 2 Cor. 6. 17: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you."²³² Andersen's irritation had probably been increased by Harkey's refusal to print in the *Olive Branch* exactly as written his communication explaining the position of the Scandinavians.²³³ Writing to Hasselquist the day Esbjörn resigned, Harkey said:²³⁴ "Dr. Reynolds and myself, as I understand it, are accused by Prof. Esbjörn of a want of orthodoxy and of exerting a bad influence upon the students... Dear Brother, what shall I make of all this? I declare to you before God and the world that I am *precisely the same now* that I have been for twenty years

²³¹ This account has drawn heavily on Passavant's recital of the causes of Esbjörn's resignation and the secession of the Scandinavians, in the *Missionary*, May 17, 1860. Passavant was unusually well informed about conditions in the West and he was in constant correspondence with prominent men on both sides of the controversy.

²³² Esbjörn to Norelius, March 8, 1860 (MSS.).

²³³ Carlsson to Hasselquist, January 25, 1860 (MSS.); J. Engberg to Norelius, February 16, 1860 (MSS.).

²³⁴ March 31, 1860 (MSS.).

in my doctrinal position, only with more light and experience, and I hope with more grace and moderation. . . To Bro. Esbjörn I have been especially kind, as far as I know my own heart. You know I was mainly instrumental in getting the Scandinavian Professorship started, as well as the election of Prof. Esbjörn. *You* advocated another man at one time, as I think one of your letters to me will yet show; but I thought a practical man from among ourselves would do best. I carried the matter through the Board and through the Synods, and have labored and prayed for the success of this work from that hour to this. Bro. Esbjörn's family lodged with me when they first came to this place gratuitously until their house was ready, and different times since, even for weeks, has one or the other been with us. What shall I say to all this?"²³⁵

The awkward terms on which the Scandinavian professorship was established were in part responsible for the friction that developed between Reynolds and Esbjörn. It was the latter's contention that the duties of the professorship included the exclusive right to give religious advice to and exercise religious care and supervision over the Scandinavian students.²³⁶ There

²³⁵ In reply (April 9, 1860) Hasselquist wrote that he had always regarded Harkey as a real friend of the Scandinavians and did so still.

²³⁶ "A Card" by Esbjörn, in the *Missionary*, July 19, 1860, written in reply to the resolutions passed by the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University censuring his action. The resolutions are printed in full in the same issue. See also Esbjörn to Norelius, June 19, 1860 (MSS.).

being no Scandinavian Lutheran church in Springfield, Esbjörn and the Scandinavian students were naturally expected to join and attend services in the English Lutheran church, of which Reynolds was the pastor. Upon examining the constitution of this congregation, Esbjörn found no reference to the Augsburg Confession and learned that the pastor was required to believe only in the Trinity and in a future punishment. In his judgment this was reason enough for refusing to join the church, and he and the Scandinavians remained aloof. It was also alleged that Doctor Reynolds seldom, if ever, preached "doctrine" and that he refrained from explaining the bodily presence of the Saviour in the Lord's Supper.²³⁷ Not finding a church to their liking, Esbjörn and the Scandinavian students held their own services Sunday evenings, a procedure which could hardly fail to bring criticism upon them. Moreover, the students expressed the desire to hold separate communion services, a request which Esbjörn did not grant until he had consulted with Reynolds. Permission having been granted, the students were in-

²³⁷ S. G. Larson, "Minnen från 1858-1860," in *Augustana Theological Quarterly*, 1905, pp. 81-94. — Larson, who was a student at Springfield, says that the last year the Scandinavian students were at Illinois State University they were called before Doctor Reynolds and asked why they did not like his sermons. Larson, the spokesman, responded: "We need both law and gospel. You preach as if every one of your hearers was a true believer in Christ, and none of us had need of repentance, and we seldom hear of anything but duties."

vited to celebrate the Lord's Supper in Esbjörn's home, when the professor took occasion to warn them against false doctrine.²³⁸ Apprised of this, Reynolds went to Esbjörn's home in high dudgeon, and a heated conversation ensued. The Scandinavian professor admitted that he had criticised the teaching of his colleagues, whereupon he was admonished that such charges had better be preferred elsewhere than in the presence of students.²³⁹ The president then threatened to "show him up" and make him regret his words. Fearful that Reynolds would bring charges against him before the Synod and discipline him before the faculty, Esbjörn decided to resign on the spot, and the following day his resignation was sent to the Board of Trustees. This was Friday, March 30, 1860.²⁴⁰ On the

²³⁸ This account is based on the article by the editor of *Hemlandet* (Erland Carlsson), "Vår Kyrkliga Ställning här i Landet," *Ibid.*, August 1, 1860. In a communication to the editor Reynolds denied the truth of this article and the others in the series and asked to be heard before the Swedes. The editor refused to print his rejoinder (*Ibid.*, September 19, 1860). The *Hemlandet* articles were based on Esbjörn's report of his action to the Scandinavian Conference at Chicago in April, 1860, and included charges against Reynolds that Harkey declared were absolutely outrageous. (Harkey to Hasselquist, July 31, 1861, MSS.). After an examination of the available documents, it is safe to assert that Esbjörn was unduly suspicious and certainly ill-advised in his outspoken criticisms of his colleagues to the students. Reynolds may have been at fault, but Esbjörn's judgment was bad.

²³⁹ Reynolds, in *Lutheran Observer*, July 20, 1860.

²⁴⁰ Esbjörn relates these details in a letter to Norelius, April 4, 1860 (MSS.).

following day, Saturday, March 31, Esbjörn called the Scandinavian students together in his home, informed them of his resignation, distributed the money he had received on their behalf, and advised them to sever their connection with the university forthwith.²⁴¹

Reynolds and Harkey were dumfounded at the news of Esbjörn's action. That very day Harkey wrote to Hasselquist:²⁴² "Today we were amazed beyond all measure to learn that Brother Esbjörn had called together the Scandinavian students and told them that he had resigned his connection with the Institution and he advised them to leave also! This is the first notice that any of us had of his intention, and you may be sure that it has greatly surprised us all." At once Harkey and Reynolds hastened to Esbjörn's home to summon him before the faculty and to demand his reasons for resigning. They found him much excited. He refused both demands, except to mention

²⁴¹ Esbjörn admitted that the students left on his advice and also on the advice of the Scandinavian ministers. He asserted that the students had nothing to live on and did the only possible thing.—The *Missionary*, July 19, 1860.

²⁴² March 31, 1860 (MSS.).—The *Lutheran Observer* (May 18, 1860) said that the move had no doubt been meditated for a long time, but so well did Esbjörn keep his secrets and the counsels of his coadjutors, that it was a perfect surprise to Harkey, Reynolds, and the Board of Trustees. *Hemlandet* (April 11, 1860) commented that the departure of Esbjörn and the Scandinavian students "will surely cause great surprise and pain," but it thought that the Scandinavian congregations would approve of it.

some personal matters. The students were likewise summoned, and obeyed. In their presence Reynolds placed all the blame on Esbjörn and urged them to continue their studies. To a man the Swedish students decided to withdraw and left a written notice to that effect with the president.²⁴³

Esbjörn's resignation on March 31 was unpremeditated.²⁴⁴ He had intended to resign at the end of the second semester;²⁴⁵ but the president's threat to "show

²⁴³ A Dane and a Norwegian remained at Springfield. The action of the faculty with reference to the seven Swedish students (Halland, Dahlsten, Suneson, Hultgren, Larson, Lindstrom, and Duwell) was taken April 2, 1860. No obstacles to their departure were stated, but the "injury thus done to these young brethren by the interruption of their studies" was deeply regretted and Esbjörn's action in causing their departure was protested. The manuscript copy of this resolution is in the Norelius collection. The students as a body did not accompany Esbjörn to Chicago. Augustana Seminary did not open at Chicago until the following fall.—See C. M. Esbjörn, "Det äldsta svensk-amerikanska läroverkets uppkomst och utveckling," in *Minnen från Jubelfesten* (Rock Island, Ill., 1911), pp. 387, 388, note 3.

²⁴⁴ The fact that Esbjörn's name appears with those of Reynolds, Susserott, and Harkey signed to an appeal for support for Illinois State University, issued sometime in January, would indicate that he was coöperating with the "Americans" up to that time at least. The appeal is printed in the *Missionary*, February 2, 1860.

²⁴⁵ The first semester closed February 29, 1860. The *Olive Branch* commented as follows: "The University has closed a very pleasant winter session. There have been 115 stu-

him up" caused him to take action which severed his connection with the Synod of Northern Illinois and placed him out of the reach of Reynolds, whose skill in intrigue Esbjörn feared.²⁴⁶

While Esbjörn's mind was brought to a sudden decision, he had for a long time been laying his plans. In conversation and through correspondence he was constantly urging upon the Swedish brethren the necessity of moving the Scandinavian professorship to Chicago. Five months before his resignation he wrote to Norelius that he had come to see that with a Scandinavian professor and an English teacher and a judicious employment of mature students as monitors Scandinavian students could be instructed in the Swedish church or in the basement of the Norwegian church at Chicago, particularly if a little assistance were lent by the pastors in that city²⁴⁷. Four days previously he had written to Hasselquist to the same effect, although in a less dogmatic tone.²⁴⁸

Esbjörn was far more confidential in revealing his plans to Norelius than he was to his other correspondents. He knew that his young friend was no apologist for the Synod of Northern Illinois or for the General Synod. His plans took more definite form after his

dents in attendance, and the general deportment and progress in study has been highly satisfactory." Quoted in the *Missionary*, March 15, 1860.

²⁴⁶ Esbjörn to Norelius, April 4, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁴⁷ Esbjörn to Norelius, October 26, 1859 (MSS.).

²⁴⁸ Esbjörn to Hasselquist, October 22, 1860 (MSS.).

holiday sojourn in Norelius' home at the close of 1859. It was here that the situation was discussed and a plan of instruction for a Scandinavian seminary was drawn up.²⁴⁹ Only a few days after his return to Springfield the Scandinavian professor conceived the idea of having the Scandinavian Church become a district synod within the Joint Synod of Ohio. Knowing Norelius' friendliness towards the Ohio people and his connections from his student days at Capital University, he requested him to write to Professor Lehmann, editor of *Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, to ascertain if the plan was feasible. He was to inquire further if the interest of the \$1,500 which Jenny Lind had contributed to the endowment of a Scandinavian professorship at Capital University could not be transferred to a professorship at a Scandinavian institution at Chicago, affiliated with the Joint Synod. "Tell him [Lehmann] to answer quickly and keep this secret, as it is confidential," he added²⁵⁰ That Esbjörn was most impatiently awaiting a reply is evident from his letter of March 8th.²⁵¹ "I am anxious to know what they

²⁴⁹ Esbjörn to Norelius, November 15, 28, December, 1859; March 8, 1860 (MSS.); Norelius to Cederstam, February 14, 1860 (MSS.). — Norelius suggested to Esbjörn that Harkey be invited to come to Attica, but Esbjörn opposed it, saying that he was making this visit to get away from the Springfield people for a few days. Later, however, he wrote that he had invited him, adding that he would rather bring him along than any other American.

²⁵⁰ Esbjörn to Norelius, January 18, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁵¹ MSS.

are thinking about in Ohio. I learn from their paper that there is an indication that they are going to oppose the Missouri Synod. If this means a softening towards 'American Lutheranism,' I would surely like to know it." Obviously disgusted with Lehmann, about a week later he wrote that he rather thought he would not reply; that they should leave him alone for a while, in the hope that he might be more favorable later. "I have had enough of the Americans and Germans," he confided.²⁵²

Esbjörn had already formulated the method of secession.²⁵³ He would not follow the example of the "Americans" at the Chicago meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois and ask permission to form a separate synod. His scheme had the merit of simplicity itself. The Scandinavian Conference should enact an ordinance of secession and then inform the Synod of Northern Illinois that they had found it necessary to organize an independent synod, from which it would follow that they had nothing further to do with the General Synod and with Illinois State University. In justifying this action the following reasons would be given: (1) The admission of the Melancthon Synod indicated a compromise with false doctrine. (2) The situation in the Synod of Northern Illinois. (3) Altman's congregation adopting the "Definite Synodical

²⁵² Esbjörn to Norelius, March 19, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁵³ Esbjörn to Norelius, January 26, 1860 (MSS.).

Platform."²⁵⁴ (4) The failure of Illinois State University to meet the needs of the Scandinavian congregations.

During these unhappy months of intrigue Esbjörn was playing the string of bringing the Scandinavian ministers to see the necessity of separation, and the remarkable thing is that this was done without dropping a hint to his colleagues at Springfield as to what was on foot. The pastors were instructed to take the matter under consideration so that at the coming meeting of the Conference the action would be unanimous.²⁵⁵ Erland Carlsson forwarded several of his letters from Norelius to Hasselquist in order that the latter might see how affairs were shaping at Springfield.²⁵⁶ Carlsson wrote that the positive tone in the letters from several friends convinced him that a schism was inevitable, but he was opposed to any steps in that direction until after the meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois in the fall. Esbjörn's confidence was measurably strengthened in the knowledge that sentiment was tending strongly in favor of separation;²⁵⁷ but he was dubious about Hasselquist and his brother-in-law, A. R. Cervin.²⁵⁸ Hasselquist was un-

²⁵⁴ D. S. Altman was one of the leaders in the movement to form a "new measure" synod in 1859.

²⁵⁵ Esbjörn to Norelius, January 12, April 4, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁵⁶ Carlsson to Hasselquist, January 25, February 29, March 30, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁵⁷ Esbjörn to Norelius, January 26, March 19, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁵⁸ Esbjörn to Norelius, January 26, 1860; Norelius to

doubtedly opposed to Esbjörn's plan, warning him that the matter was a serious one.²⁵⁹ After Esbjörn's resignation, however, he consoled himself in the thought that secession was inevitable. He had hoped for better things and found increasing satisfaction in the Scandinavian affiliation with the General Synod, but events had shaped themselves in such a way that there was no other way out short of separation. Hasselquist believed in the General Synod because he wanted the Scandinavians to become Americans and because he believed they would be stronger in union. He hoped that the separation would not be permanent. He did not oppose the American Lutheran Church on account of its lack of ceremonies or because of its revivals; his only objection was doctrinal.²⁶⁰

From the documentary evidence and in the light of subsequent events, it is clear that Esbjörn's sudden resignation was not the cause but rather the occasion of the secession of the Scandinavians from the Synod of Northern Illinois. The entire procedure, from Esbjörn's resignation to the formal act of separation adopted by the United Scandinavian Conference at

Cederstam, February 14, 1860 (MSS.). — "Den betänksamaste torde väl Hasselquist vara; men om förslaget rörande Cervin antages, så är han nog med om saken." Esbjörn feared that Cervin was "loose" and that he did not have his eyes fully open.

²⁵⁹ Esbjörn to Hasselquist, February 7, 1860, in *Augustana Theological Quarterly*, 1903, pp. 202, 203.

²⁶⁰ Hasselquist to Harkey, April 9, 1860 (MSS.).

Chicago, was revolutionary. Doctor Norelius, writing as an historian, declares that if revolution is ever justifiable, it certainly must be when the pure teaching of the Word of God is at stake or when there is danger of disaster from false doctrine.²⁶¹ Be that as it may, the manner of Esbjörn's resignation was destined to have far-reaching consequences and to bring about a state of affairs that might have been avoided had the separation been effected through the channels approved by the Christian church and in this particular case by the constitution of the Synod of Northern Illinois. Esbjörn himself seems to have felt that even Norelius, his loyal friend, was not ardent enough in defending him, preferring rather to defend the action of the Conference in voting to separate. In commenting on Norelius' "Explanation" published in the *Missionary*,²⁶² wherein he takes the editor of the *Olive Branch* to task for certain statements in reference to the action of the Scandinavian Conference, Esbjörn asserts that he thinks he is almost "soft soaping" in admitting that the editor did not attempt deliberately to misrepresent. The "Explanation," in his judgment, should not only have dealt with the action of the Conference but his resignation as well, in view of the fact that he had been shamefully maligned by both the *Olive Branch* and the *Lutheran Observer*, "who have suddenly become friends like Herod and

²⁶¹ Norelius, Vol. I., p. 813.

²⁶² May 24, 1860.

Pilate." "My sudden resignation has made me the target, but it is just this act that has made separation possible." If affairs had been allowed to take their even, slow Swedish course, he said, there would have been nothing but talk.²⁶³

Esbjörn was correct in stating that his resignation had made him the target for the most acrimonious criticism. The *Lutheran Observer*²⁶⁴ said that Esbjörn either acted precipitately, or from heated impulse, or else he must have low ideas of Christian propriety and religious obligations. The alleged grounds for this step, it continued, reveal a degree of weakness and intolerance totally inconsistent with Christian excellence. The withdrawal will help the university because it is better off without men holding such extreme views and so extremely bigoted. The *Olive Branch* was perfectly satisfied that the whole thing originated in Esbjörn's suspicions and his want of acquaintance with the manner of conducting literary institutions in America.²⁶⁵ President Reynolds thought it strange that Esbjörn and the Scandinavians had such "deep feeling," since no American heard of it until the day before Esbjörn resigned, "and even then and up to the time of the Chicago Conference he refused to give his reasons for resigning to his colleagues in the faculty. Such a want of candor and

²⁶³ Esbjörn to Norelius, May 26, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁶⁴ May 18, 1860.

²⁶⁵ Printed in *Lutheran Observer*, May 18, 1860.

openness stands self-condemned, and is only paralleled by the frivolity of the pretexts upon which it rested... Prof. Esbjörn left us without a word of warning, in the middle of a session, although he was required by our constitution to give three months' notice in the Literary and six months in the Theological department. He and those who acted with him induced from fifteen to twenty of our students to leave with him, giving them money collected for the education of beneficiaries at Springfield to take them away from the Institution and scatter them over the country, to fill our churches with alarm, distrust and heartburnings enkindled by suspicion and misrepresentation."²⁶⁶ Both Reynolds and Harkey denied absolutely that there had been any interference with Esbjörn's religious care over the students. The resolutions of the Board of Trustees of the university declared that the reasons alleged by Esbjörn were "destitute of all foundation in fact."²⁶⁷ Harkey's frantic letter to Hasselquist, written the day of the resignation, asserted that the efforts of a few ultra men, like Fair and Springer, were at the bottom of the whole difficulty, the natural tendency being for one extreme to beget another. "It is this unhappy controversy," he said, "which has roused Esbjörn's suspicions and fears, and made him see everything in a false light."²⁶⁸ The

²⁶⁶ *The Missionary*, June 7, 1860.

²⁶⁷ The resolutions are printed in full, *Ibid.*, July 19, 1860.

²⁶⁸ Harkey to Hasselquist, March 31, 1860 (MSS.).

wise and gentle Passavant "had not the heart nor the disposition to record" in his *Missionary*²⁶⁹ the misconception of numerous private and personal affairs that led to "the sudden and utterly unlooked for resignation of Prof. Esbjörn"; but to Norelius²⁷⁰ he wrote that it was not difficult to see "how br. Esbjörn should have become confused in such a *wirr-warr* and struggling with poverty, debt and doubt." "But I am truly sorry," he continued, "that he should have left them suddenly, without notification or warning to the great peril and injury of the Institution."

Except for his article in the *Lutheran Standard*, May 25, 1860, Professor Esbjörn took no part in the public controversy for a time, vowing silence until all the "cacklers had emptied themselves."²⁷¹ In the course of the year, however, he replied to his enemies in the *Missionary*,²⁷² the *Lutheran Observer*,²⁷³ and the *Olive Branch*.²⁷⁴ The principal points in these articles were summarized in a letter to Norelius,²⁷⁵ who had offered to reply to Reynolds' article.²⁷⁶ He

²⁶⁹ May 17, 1860.

²⁷⁰ May, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁷¹ Esbjörn to Norelius, June 19, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁷² July 19, 1860.

²⁷³ July 20, 1860.

²⁷⁴ August, 1860. — Harkey refused to print one of Esbjörn's letters, asserting that it was written in a very unkind spirit, filled with gross personalities, the most offensive gibes and sneers, and altogether unworthy of him.

²⁷⁵ June 19, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁷⁶ The *Missionary*, June 7, 1860.

denied that he had ever found fault with the trustees or with the Synod of Northern Illinois,—only with certain individuals. He denied that he had refused to give reasons for his resignation and affirmed that he had read his resignation to Harkey and Reynolds and that he had given further reasons in the *Lutheran Standard* and before the Scandinavian Conference. With reference to the six months' notice before laying down his duties, his defense was that this provision was not applicable to him, since it was adopted by the Synod on September 17, 1858,²⁷⁷ whereas he was elected to the professorship on October 1, 1857. According to his interpretation, this was *ex post facto* legislation. He also stated that he could not know six months in advance how he would be treated. Moreover, he contended that he had never taken an oath binding him to the university's constitution,—only to the Augsburg Confession. He knew of no "violent and factious" manner in his resignation, because he had tendered it "respectfully."

In the maze of conflicting testimony, highly colored

²⁷⁷ At a meeting of the Synod of Illinois in 1857 a committee was appointed to confer with a committee from the Synod of Northern Illinois in order to prepare a constitution for the government of the theological department of Illinois State University. At the meeting of the Synod of Northern Illinois at Mendota, September 17, 1858, the terms of the professorship were agreed upon.—See the *Missionary*, October 8, 1857, and the *Minutes of the Synod of Northern Illinois*.

by the excitement of the moment, it is hazardous, and perhaps superfluous, for the historian to pronounce judgment upon Esbjörn's hasty act. Happily the wisdom of the Scandinavians in setting up an independent synod does not hinge upon the ethics of the Scandinavian professor's resignation or upon his own public defense of it, which smacks strongly of special pleading. One could wish that Esbjörn had been endowed with more poise and with a better sense of historical values. The cause for which the Scandinavian leaders contended was great enough to overcome opposition through calm and mature deliberation. It gained nothing and lost much by Esbjörn's action making it possible for some people to proclaim that it turned upon the personality and temperament of a single man.

VII

THE AUGUSTANA SYNOD

The scene now shifts to Chicago, whither Esbjörn and his family had moved in the early part of April.²⁷⁸ The departure of the Scandinavian professor from Springfield has been compared with the "flight to Medina," with the Scandinavian students in retinue; but the truth is that the "flight" was without pomp and circumstance, with probably only a few students in the company.²⁷⁹

Some days before the crisis at Springfield a call had been issued for a meeting of the United Scandinavian Conference at Chicago on April 23, 1860.²⁸⁰ This summons could have had no connection with Esbjörn's resignation, having been issued before that event; but as it fell out, the principal item of business

²⁷⁸ The *Missionary*, April 19, 1860, announced that "the Rev. Prof. Lars Esbjörn desires to be addressed, until further notice, in care of Rev. E. Carlsson, Chicago, Ills., instead of Springfield, Ills."

²⁷⁹ C. M. Esbjörn, "Det äldsta svensk-amerikanska läroverkets uppkomst och utveckling," in *Minnen från Jubelfesten* (1911), pp. 387, 388, note 3; Erland Carlsson, in *Jubel-Album* (1893), p. 124.

²⁸⁰ The call was published in *Hemlandet*, April 4, 1860, whereas the announcement of Esbjörn's resignation did not appear until April 11.

centered around the extraordinary situation which the Springfield imbroglio had created.

Harkey insisted that he be given a hearing before the Conference, in view of the fact that he had wind of several charges that were to be preferred against him and Reynolds. "For myself I *claim the right* of being heard not only before the Synod and Trustees, but also before your Conference if action is there to be had affecting the Institution and myself," he wrote to Hasselquist.²⁸¹ "Much will now depend upon yourself and a few other prominent brethren. You can yet heal the difficulty and save the Church. And I do beseech you most earnestly and affectionately not to separate yourself from us until you have heard *both sides* of the statement, and are *sure* that you are right in so doing."

Professor Esbjörn evidently feared Reynolds and Harkey. In his letter informing Hasselquist of his resignation he wrote:²⁸² "Do not take any stock in Doctor Reynolds' explanation which he will naturally try to make public. He is a great explainer and intriguer. Hear my side and that of the students before you take any stock in his rodomontade. If Reynolds and Harkey say that they intend to be present at the Conference, my advice would be to reply firmly that we will decide this question without outside interference."

²⁸¹ March 31, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁸² April 2, 1860 (MSS.).

When the Conference convened on April 23, 1860,²⁸³ Harkey and Reynolds were on the ground; and the convention wisely decided to give them a hearing before taking action with reference to the relations with Illinois State University and the Synod of Northern Illinois. Had it been ordered otherwise the Scandinavians would have laid themselves open to just criticism, especially in view of the circumstances surrounding Esbjörn's resignation.

Two whole days were devoted to listening to Professor Esbjörn's defense and to the rebuttal of Doctors Harkey and Reynolds, whereupon a committee prepared a report to the Conference. The documents before the committee were as follows: (1) A statement or report of Professor Esbjörn, reciting the reasons for his resignation. (2) A document from the faculty of Illinois State University, containing statements and resolutions relative to the resignation. (3) Two documents, one having exclusive reference to the Education Society of the synods connected with the institution and the other containing an account of the money privately received and expended by Esbjörn for the support of the Scandinavian students.

After perusing the documents and comparing them with the verbal statements of both parties before the Conference, the committee concluded that it could not deal with and decide upon Professor Esbjörn's resignation as an isolated act; "but as it stands connected

²⁸³ It remained in session until the 27th.

with, and actually has grown out of, the difficulties that have existed in our Synod for some time past, and in order that we may have a distinct understanding of the matter and place ourselves right before the Christian public, we deem it necessary to enumerate some of them."²⁸⁴

The committee report then reviews the doctrinal controversy, beginning with the Synodical meeting at Geneva in May, 1856, and asserts that the decided doctrinal differences in the Synod might at any time by an accidental majority against the Scandinavians force a change upon them. In view of this state of affairs it was resolved "That we approve of Prof. Esbjörn's resignation as our Scandinavian professor in Illinois State University, and that we hereby tender him our sincere thanks for the earnestness with which he has labored for, and the faithfulness with which he has watched over the interests of our churches, in his capacity as such Professor, and also for the parental care and kindness he has evinced for our students, and that we approve of the manner in which he has distributed the funds that have come to his hands for their benefit."

²⁸⁴ "Explanation" by Norelius, in the *Missionary*, May 24, 1860; Report of Committee appointed by the Conference to transmit Resolutions of the Conference relative to the Separation from the Synod of Northern Illinois, signed by Paul Andersen and Erland Carlsson, in the *Missionary*, May 17, 1860; also printed in the *Olive Branch*, June, 1860. The Swedish version is printed in Norelius, Vol. II., pp. 4-6.

It was further resolved that the Scandinavian ministers and churches hitherto connected with the Synod of Northern Illinois peaceably withdraw their ecclesiastical connection with that Synod and that the president of said body be informed of this action.

As a logical sequence it was resolved that a convention should be held in the Norwegian Lutheran church at Clinton, Rock County, Wisconsin, for the purpose of organizing a synod, and that a committee of three be appointed to prepare a constitution to be presented at the convention.

After these resolutions had been unanimously adopted by the Conference, it was resolved that the separation was not occasioned by ill-will towards anyone, but that it arose out of sincere attachment to the Augsburg Confession.

Despite the efforts of Harkey and Reynolds the Scandinavians unanimously vindicated Esbjörn's action,²⁸⁵ although the fact that the resolutions relegated it to a rather minor place in a host of events indicates that they preferred to emphasize the inevit-

²⁸⁵ Harkey was greatly offended at the action of the Conference and the articles by Esbjörn, Paul Andersen, and in *Hemlandet*. He wrote to Hasselquist, July 31, 1861: "Some of those charges against us in Prof. Esbjörn's report and afterwards in substance published in *Hemlandet* and some other papers, were absolutely outrageous, and must make a *black page* indeed in the history of our poor abused Church, when in the future it shall come to be written." C. M. Esbjörn, in *Minnen från Jubelfesten*, p. 366.

ableness of the event rather than to dwell on the method of its accomplishment. Nevertheless Professor Esbjörn had good cause for elation over his vindication and the congratulations that were his. As a further mark of confidence reposed in him, he was elected chairman of the respective committees appointed to draft a constitution for the new synod and to prepare a resolution respecting the establishment of an independent institution of learning.

The unanimity in favor of separation which prevailed at the Chicago Conference was carried over into the convention which met on June 5, 1860, in the Norwegian Lutheran church at Jefferson Prairie, Wisconsin, five miles distant from the railway station at Clinton. Indicative of this was the fact that all the Scandinavian ministers who had been members of the Synod of Northern Illinois except one, who was unavoidably absent, were present.²⁸⁶ At the very first session the motion to organize a Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Synod was unanimously adopted, and T. N. Hasselquist was elected president, O. J. Hatlestad, secretary, and A. A. Klove, treasurer.²⁸⁷

The constitution of the new Synod was patterned after the constitution of the Synod of Northern Illi-

²⁸⁶ Correspondence from the meeting of the Augustana Synod, signed "J. E." (Jonas Engberg), in *Hemlandet*, June 13, 1860.

²⁸⁷ *Protokoll hållet vid Skandinaviska Ev. Lutherska Augustana Synodens Första Möte i Clinton, Rock County, Wisconsin, d. 5-11 Juni 1860*, pp. 3, 4.

nois,²⁸⁸ but it was clearly stated that the Synod retains and confesses not only the three oldest symbols (the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian) but also the unaltered Augsburg Confession, as a short and correct summary of the essentials of Christian doctrine as developed and explained in the other symbolical books.²⁸⁹ The name itself, Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod, was a guarantee of the ingrained symbolism of the organization. Knowing the controversy that led to the separation, it does not seem strange that the delegates were ready to remove all doubt in regard to the doctrinal character of the Synod. Some differences of opinion, however, arose over the advisability of incorporating the word "Scandinavian" in the title. It was objected that the term might lend itself to the interpretation that the Synod wished to hold aloof from all English influence and was opposed to Americanization; but at length it was agreed that the word should stand without danger of such interpretation and that it signified merely that all the members of the organization were Scandinavians.²⁹⁰

For many years, almost since the establishment of the Synod, it has been the fashion to praise the wisdom of the fathers in setting up an independent Scandinavian Church in order the better to minister to the Scandinavian-American population. Regardless of the

²⁸⁸ "J. E.," in *Hemlandet*, June 13, 1860.

²⁸⁹ The *Missionary*, July 19, 1860, contains an extended and sympathetic account of the convention.

²⁹⁰ "J. E.," in *Hemlandet*, June 13, 1860.

question of wisdom, it should be pointed out that this was not the original purpose of "Father" Hasselquist, "Father" Norelius, and "Father" Carlsson. Hasselquist, as we have seen, was not opposed to the American Lutheran Church on any other grounds than doctrine.²⁹¹ The year after the organization of the Augustana Synod he wrote to Dr. J. A. Seiss²⁹² that the Scandinavians had no intention of building up a church of their own or aside from the Lutheran Church in America. "True we have certain peculiarities and will have them as long as we continue to use the Scandinavian languages," he said, "but we do not intend to keep them longer than necessary. We long and pray for a United Lutheran Church in America on its own foundation." Eight years later, when the Norwegians were threatening to secede from the Augustana Synod, he wrote to Passavant²⁹³ that it is wrong and injurious to the cause of the Lord that we should be divided on national grounds. The Norwegian brethren, he said, are intensely Norwegian, and Christianity is not powerful enough to overcome their nationalism. Norelius was equally positive in replying to Harkey's assertion²⁹⁴ that a Scandinavian Lutheran Church could not exist and prosper permanently separated from American Lutherans, and that it would be eaten up by other sects and denominations.

²⁹¹ Hasselquist to Harkey, April 9, 1860 (MSS.).

²⁹² January 29, 1861 (MSS.).

²⁹³ January 26, 1869 (MSS.).

²⁹⁴ *Olive Branch*, May, 1860.

He resented the implication that it was ever intended to set up a permanent Scandinavian Synod. "We have never dreamed of such a course," he wrote, "nor have we done a single act from which such a conclusion could be drawn. We are not, and never will be, shut up within our own nationality. We will be more and more Americanized every day."²⁹⁵ Carlsson, then editor of *Hemlandet*, predicted that it would probably not be long before the Synod, which then had only Scandinavians, would be able to number among its members doctrinally sound Americans.²⁹⁶

Passavant, who was originally opposed to the Scandinavians going into the Synod of Northern Illinois and all along fully appreciated the difficulty of their position, was genuinely sorry that the brethren to whom he looked for a decided conservative influence left the Synod. "Would to God," he wrote to Norelius, "that you could see your way clearly to come into the General Synod on the Augsburg Confession."²⁹⁷

While Reynolds and Harkey clung, or pretended to cling, to the idea of merging the various factions into one United Lutheran Church, the *Lutheran Observer* and the extreme "American" Lutherans regarded it illusory. "Such a union is only possible on one con-

²⁹⁵ *The Missionary*, May 24, 1860.

²⁹⁶ "Vår Kyrkliga Ställning här i Landet," in *Hemlandet*, August 22, 1860.

²⁹⁷ May, 1860 (MSS.).

dition," commented the *Observer*,²⁹⁸ "i. e., that we yield to their demands, and tamely submit our necks to the yoke of these would-be popes." S. S. Schmucker thought the Scandinavians would be inconsistent if they asked to join the General Synod; and if they did, the General Synod could not receive them.²⁹⁹ Francis Springer's experience of twenty-one years in the West convinced him that the only way for the Lutherans to agree was to be in separate synods accordant with the doctrine and ritual preferred and united only in Christian courtesy, fraternity, and love. "It is downright wickedness for us to pretend we are united when we are not," he said.³⁰⁰ An editorial in the *Lutheran Observer*³⁰¹ was prophetic of what was to occur in 1866, when certain American and German symbolists withdrew from the General Synod to form the General Council. It prophesied that the Scandinavian example would be followed by others and might prove an entering wedge which ultimately would sunder the symbolical portion attached to the General Synod from their American brethren. The issue which contained this editorial was dated May 25. The following day Esbjörn, after reading the editor's venture into the realm of prophecy, wrote to Norelius:³⁰² "He fears that our example will result in the secession of all the

²⁹⁸ July 27, 1860.

²⁹⁹ *Lutheran Observer*, September 21, 1860.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, June 8, 1860.

³⁰¹ May 25, 1860.

³⁰² May 26, 1860 (MSS.).

symbolists from the General Synod, so that this is 'the beginning of the end.' Sing hosanna!"

The secession of the Scandinavians from the Synod of Northern Illinois separated them from ecclesiastical connection with that body and the General Synod, but three years were to drag their weary length before their affairs were wound up. The final episode is closely related to the founding of Augustana College and Theological Seminary, which was to sojourn at two different places before taking up its abode at its present location at Rock Island, Illinois.

Quite naturally the brethren in the old Synod resented Esbjörn's resignation and the events which followed hard upon it. At its annual meeting at Knoxville, Illinois, in September, 1860, the Synod of Northern Illinois adopted the substance of a report formulated by the Rev. Ephraim Miller, which stigmatized the secession of the Scandinavians "a hasty, violent, and revolutionary procedure," and pronounced it the duty of the Synod to declare its sense of the insult thus offered to the honor not only of a Synod but of a whole Church.³⁰³

The Augustana Synod, on June 8, 1860, resolved that when Esbjörn ceased his work as professor at Springfield the Scandinavian professorship was not suspended, only transferred,³⁰⁴ wherefore he was de-

³⁰³ *Minutes of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois, September 9, 10, 1860.*

³⁰⁴ See note 316.

clared to be Scandinavian and theological professor at Augustana Seminary at Chicago.³⁰⁵ This resolution followed the adoption of the constitution for Augustana Seminary. A committee of three was appointed to draw up a resolution to be presented to the Board of Trustees of Illinois State University at their next meeting, on June 27. The committee³⁰⁶ reported to the Synod that, according to the statement of the treasurer of Illinois State University, January 24, 1859, the amount of the endowment fund was \$1,382.40, with accrued interest; and that in view of the fact that this sum had been contributed by the Scandinavians themselves and therefore belonged to them, the management of Illinois State University be asked to instruct its treasurer to make an accounting to the treasurer of Augustana Seminary and to turn over all moneys, documents, and papers pertaining to the fund. The recommendation of the committee having been adopted, a committee of two was commissioned to go to Springfield to lay the matter before the Board of Trustees.

The long drawn out negotiations which this motion inaugurated reflect little credit on either side. The trustees of the university, conceiving that the Synod of Northern Illinois had jurisdiction in the matter, referred it to that body for final action. The Synod, concurring in the report of the committee appointed

³⁰⁵ *Protokoll*, June 8, 1860.

³⁰⁶ Paul Andersen, E. Norelius, P. Palmquist.

to consider the petition of the Augustana Synod,³⁰⁷ admitted that the fund had been collected by the Scandinavians mainly among themselves for the specific purpose of establishing a professorship at Illinois State University, but that it was really a diversion of the fund to remove it from Springfield and to use it at any other place and for any other purpose and that in law and justice it could be held at Springfield. It was alleged that a debt of nearly \$1,000 had been incurred by the Education Society during the time the Scandinavians were connected with the institution; that more than two thirds of the beneficiaries of the society had been Scandinavians; and that the Scandinavians therefore must bear their portion of the indebtedness. For the "sake of peace," however, it was voted to return the money to the Scandinavians, provided no legal obstacles prevented, and to direct the treasurer of the university to transfer the bond and mortgage which he held on the Swedish Lutheran church at Chicago to the amount of \$750. The balance of the fund should be returned to the Scandinavians as soon as the accounts of the Education Society were adjusted.³⁰⁸

The adjustment of the accounts of the Education Society proved to be a most difficult and aggravating matter. The disposition of both sides was to compli-

³⁰⁷ The chairman of the committee was Doctor Harkey, who was also treasurer of the Education Society.

³⁰⁸ *Minutes of the Tenth Annual Convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois, September 5-10, 1860; the Missionary, October 4, 1860.*

cate it by opening the wounds that had been inflicted during and after Esbjörn's resignation. The charges and counter charges that were broadcast through the religious press made some men clutch at anything that might add to the discomfort of the other side. Even the correspondence between Harkey and Hasselquist, upon whom finally fell the task of straightening out the tangle, threatened to sever the pleasant relations that had existed between them from the beginning.³⁰⁹ "If Christians will not do right, whether on your side, or ours, without so much trouble," wrote Harkey, "then it is enough to make any one despond." "We want to be on good terms with our brethren," said Hasselquist, "but we don't wish to buy their friendship. If you insist that we owe you \$2,000, we will never trouble you again about this matter. We will have to take it up somewhere else." Even the small amount of \$39 which Esbjörn's sons paid in tuition at the university, and which Esbjörn demanded be refunded, figured in the negotiations.³¹⁰

Another matter that muddled the waters was the Jenny Lind fund at Capital University, amounting to about \$1,500, which the Swedish nightingale had donated in 1852 toward the endowment of a Scandi-

³⁰⁹ The following manuscript letters written by Hasselquist and Harkey relative to this are in the Norelius collection: July 4, 23, 31, November 6, December 7, 1861, April 28, 1862.

³¹⁰ Hasselquist to Harkey, July 23, 1861 (MSS.); Esbjörn to Carlsson, December 4, 1860 (MSS.).

navian professorship. On his trip to the East, shortly after the meeting of the Augustana Synod in June, 1860, Esbjörn had conferred with the trustees of Capital University to induce them to transfer the money to Augustana Seminary.³¹¹ In view of the fact that there was little prospect of accomplishing at Capital University the purpose for which the donation was made, the board deemed it an act of justice to transfer it into the hands of the Board of Directors of Augustana Seminary, provided there were no legal obstacles in the way.³¹² It developed that while there was no legal impediment, there was another even more formidable. The money had disappeared! It appears that as president of Capital University, Doctor Reynolds secured possession of it, probably to apply it on his salary or in the form of a loan. When Hasselquist called this to the attention of Harkey, the latter professed ignorance, adding that in any event if Reynolds got it, the transaction was honest and that it belonged more to him than to the Augustana Synod, which was not in existence at the time the donation was made.

Hasselquist protested that there was no justice in adjusting the debt of the Education Society on the basis of nationality, since the money had been given to a common fund. To which Harkey replied: "It is

³¹¹ *Hemlandet*, July 18, 1860.

³¹² *Lutheran Standard*, quoted in the *Missionary*, August 9, 1860; *Protokoll hållet vid Skandinaviska Ev. Lutherska Augustana Synodens Andra Årsmöte i Galesburg, Knox Co., Illinois, d. 4-11 Juni 1861*.

clear, Dear Brother, that in *this* case it *suits* you to say, we will not pay debts according to nationality; but when it suited you to withdraw as a nationality, to set up for yourselves and make all sorts of unfounded and slanderous charges against us,³¹³ it was all a movement of the Scandinavian nationality from first to last! So it goes in this world. What is white to-day may be black to-morrow if it suits us so to regard it. *You have compelled us* to adjust matters according to nationality and now *claim back* the money given to the Institution solely on the score of nationality."

By manipulating the figures with reference to the money expended by the Education Society for the benefit of the Scandinavians, the Synod of Northern Illinois maintained that there was a balance due the university.³¹⁴ The treasurer of the university therefore refused to deliver up the mortgage on the Chicago church property except upon order of the Board of Trustees. With \$750 in the hands of the Augustana Synod in the form of the Chicago loan and the balance of the endowment fund in the possession of the university treasurer, Hasselquist proposed a settlement by which the university was to surrender the \$750, the

³¹³ The Scandinavians suspected that the funds of the Education Society had not been honestly husbanded by Harkey.—Esbjörn to Carlsson, December 4, 1860 (MSS.).

³¹⁴ *Protokoll, 1861; Minutes of the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Synod of Northern Illinois at Adaline, Illinois, September 17-23, 1861.*

balance of the fund, about \$456, to be paid to the Education Society. The Synod of Northern Illinois in 1861 agreed to this proposition on condition that the interest on the Chicago loan be paid up to the time of settlement; and its committee was instructed to inform the Augustana Synod that if this condition were not acceded to, the former Synod would assume the entire debt of the Education Society and would oppose the transfer of any portion of the endowment fund. It was not until at the fourth annual meeting of the Augustana Synod in June, 1863, that Hasselquist could report that the \$750, less two years' interest (\$150), had been paid, thus congratulating the Synod on a "happy ending to this long and unfortunate affair."³¹⁵

It does not lie within the province of this brief history of the founding of the Augustana Synod to follow the fortunes of the struggling Augustana Seminary which was domiciled in the basement of the Norwegian Lutheran church on Franklin street, Chicago, and opened its first academic year on September 1, 1860, with Professor Lars Paul Esbjörn as president.³¹⁶ The

³¹⁵ *Protokoll, 1863.*

³¹⁶ C. M. Esbjörn, in *Minnen från Jubelfesten*, pp. 368, 369. — The precise date of the founding of Augustana College and Theological Seminary is a matter of dispute. Norelius (*Lefnadsteckning af T. N. Hasselquist*, p. 89) leans toward June 8, 1860. C. M. Esbjörn prefers June 7, 1860. E. W. Olson, in an interesting article in *Ungdomsvännen* (May, 1917, pp. 108-110, "När grundades Augustana College?"), after reviewing the history of the Scandinavian professorship from the Conference at Andover, De-

institution led a precarious existence for some years. The outbreak of the Civil War was a heavy blow to the hopes of the infant seminary for a large student body and adequate financial support. A ray of encouragement penetrated the gloom when by royal decree King Carl XV of Sweden and Norway ordered collections to be taken in the churches of his realm for two years for the benefit of the Swedish-American institution. His Majesty also authorized the circulation of a subscription list and donated some four thousand volumes of his private library.³¹⁷ For this fortunate turn of affairs the Augustana Synod was largely indebted to the Rev. O. C. T. Andrén, who was commissioned by the Synod in 1860 to visit the Scandinavian countries.

From the beginning it was understood that the seminary was located temporarily at Chicago; and it was realized that, whatever might be the ultimate location, the maintenance of the institution was a life and death matter for the Augustana Synod.³¹⁸ Passavant, who never lost interest in the Scandinavians, was intensely interested in a colony in Northern Iowa or Southern Minnesota, which should be exclusively Scandinavian in order to allow the Scandinavians to work out their Lutheran ideas of a practical education without opposition or interference. He believed their

cember 1, 1854, to the meeting of the Augustana Synod, June 5, 1860, fixes the date positively at June 7, 1860.

³¹⁷ *Protokoll*, June 7, 1861. — About \$10,000 was collected.

³¹⁸ Carlsson to Hasselquist, January 2, 1861 (MSS.).

system of education should include a course of study from the parochial school through the seminary.³¹⁹ Several possible locations were under consideration³²⁰ until the choice fell upon Paxton, Illinois,³²¹ whither the institution migrated in 1863.³²² Simultaneous with this change, which was opposed by Esbjörn, the first Swedish Lutheran pastor in the Augustana Synod and the Scandinavian professor, resigned the presidency and professorship and returned to Sweden and ended his eventful and stormy career as pastor in the State Church.³²³

³¹⁹ Passavant to Hasselquist, November 18, 1861 (MSS.); Carlsson to Hasselquist, December 21, 1860 (MSS.).

³²⁰ Report of the Board of Directors (Erland Carlsson, chairman), in *Protokoll*, June 7, 1861.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, June 29, 1863.

³²² The institution was removed to Rock Island, Illinois, in 1875.

³²³ Esbjörn died at Östra Wåhla on July 2, 1870.

VIII

RETROSPECT

In reviewing the events of the stormy years between 1850 and 1860—stormy in national politics as well as in church politics—through it all runs a thread of inevitableness in which men and measures were the instruments of a destiny which spelled schism and separation in the Lutheran Church. Many of these events were closely associated with a single man, whom the historian has singled out as the founder of the Augustana Synod. If the finger of destiny had beckoned to another man to cast loose from the Old World moorings to labor on the prairies of the Mississippi Valley, and had left the Rev. Lars Paul Esbjörn to minister to his countrymen in the land of his birth, who can say when the birth of the Augustana Synod would have occurred or whether it would have occurred at all? We can dismiss the fanciful “theory” that the secession from the Synod of Northern Illinois was a secret conspiracy among the Scandinavian leaders. There were intrigues and plans afoot, but the resignation of Esbjörn was as great a surprise to the Scandinavians as it was to Harkey and Reynolds.

The grand scheme of a polyglot Lutheran Synod and a “melting pot” institution of learning was consumed in a doctrinal conflagration fanned by the winds

of nationalism. Even the early hopes of Hasselquist, Norelius, and Carlsson for a reunion and reconciliation with the American brethren were overwhelmed by the growing spirit of nationalism fed by the mighty immigration of Swedes in the last quarter of the century. The Augustana Synod became more Swedish than its founders desired. With the secession of the Norwegians in 1870, who had from the beginning constituted a minority in the Augustana Synod, the Swedes were left alone to work out their problems.

In retrospect we may regret that the American Lutherans should have been deprived of the wholesome conservative influence of the Scandinavians, and the latter no doubt lost much of value which the Americans had to offer. It is true that from 1870 to 1918 the Augustana Synod was a member of the General Council; but a synod embracing the entire United States and Canada could not find itself comfortably at home in a nationwide general body made up of district synods.³²⁴ When in 1917 the General Synod, the General Council, and the United Synod of the South merged into the United Lutheran Church, the Augustana Synod held aloof and thus severed the bonds that had united it to the General Council. When the question of entering the merger was before the Augustana Synod at its annual convention in Minneapolis in June, 1918, it was the sense of a large majority of the delegates that the Swedish Lutheran Church could better

³²⁴ See Norelius, Vol. II., pp. 151-163.

fulfill its mission as an independent organization. Here, fifty-eight years after the first meeting of the Augustana Synod, nationality again asserted itself. "We have had our own service book for these fifty years while the General Council has had hers, which shows that we are not amalgamating," said Doctor M. C. Ranseen, one of the prominent leaders for many years. "If we merge it will go with us as it has with the Swedish Baptist and Methodist bodies, and we will be unable to appeal to the Swedish immigrants as a Swedish Church," suggested the Rev. J. G. Dahlberg. "The Mission Friends could do this, as they are a church composed exclusively of Swedes."³²⁵ Without question a considerable number of leaders have considered the Augustana Synod to be the best medium for preserving Swedish "culture" in America.³²⁶

In reviewing the results of the deliberations at the first meeting of the Augustana Synod, Doctor Passavant wrote as follows: "A work of vast magnitude is committed to their hands. Tens of thousands of immigrants from the Old World look to them for spiritual care. Let them be faithful to their own souls, and they will be faithful to 'their brethren after the flesh.' Let them seek first of all the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all else shall be added to

³²⁵ Notes taken by the present writer at the meeting of the Augustana Synod at Minneapolis, June 8, 1918.

³²⁶ S. G. Öhman, *Augustana-Synodens Själfständighetsförklaring*, 1918. *Kyrkliga Vägar och Afvägar* (The Author, 1918.)

them. Let them do all their things unto Christ, and nothing through strife or vainglory. In this way, they will not only be able to keep the unity of the spirit, and to live and love as brethren, but also, to become eminently useful in establishing pure Christian churches, and training them in all virtues of the Christian life."³²⁷

³²⁷ *The Missionary*, July 19, 1860.

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